CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES
VS.
MODERNISM

Proof of the genuineness of Christianity, and
evidence of the weakness of modern theology,
which seeks to destroy the foundations of
Christianity

By

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DEDICATION

To all students who are faithfully preparing themselves to preach the word. May none become discouraged, nor grow weary in well-doing. The author is happy to be a preacher of the good news and is happy to see fellow proclaimers of the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to encourage them. We have this consolation: God had but one Son, and He was a preacher.

INTRODUCTION

We are living in very difficult times, morally and spiritually. This seems to be the age of doubt, a time of questioning the old traditional values. Some are experimenting with other religions. With these trends all around us, modernism and liberalism seem to be taking full advantage of the situation by marking the kind of progress that just a few years ago would have been unthinkable.

All of this is to say that Christianity not only has its traditional enemies but it also has enemies from within who are seeking to undermine it and to destroy it. These are the people who leave the impression that they love the Lord and want to promote a better way of life but underneath this claim, faith in God, Christ, the Bible, and Christianity is crumbling away and being replaced by a social gospel. These are also people who can have a great influence on those around them, especially young people, but that influence is not for good.

It is necessary that we constantly realize the importance of going back to God's word, of reading and studying it, that faith strong enough to sustain us might be created in our minds and lives. We must never forget who God is, what He has done, our need for Him, and our dependence on Him. We must preserve our faith and contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. In so doing, we have nothing to be ashamed of but rather so much to be thankful for, knowing in whom we believe and what our God can do for us.

It is up to us who believe in God to hold Him up to man, to preach and teach His word that others might believe. This is why the Lord has commanded us to take His message to the whole world. Even in these modern times, man needs God more than anything or anyone else.

I am so thankful that a good man, a gospel preacher, brother Bill Nicks, has written this book. He knows that all people need these studies, but especially our young people. Having served the Lord across the United States, in Nigeria and other places, he has seen the need for these materials, and his years of service qualify him to write on the subject.

Please read and study this book, along with your Bible or New Testament, and I know that you will profit from it. If you will keep an open mind and weigh all the facts, genuine faith will be created in your heart, and that faith can lead you to obey God. If your faith is weak now, this book can be a means of restoring it and giving you the thrust to go on to do the things that will please God. As young people, you will be encouraged to stay on the right path. As Christians, you will have your faith and zeal renewed for the Lord.

What more can I say? Certainly, we need more books such as this for our time. They can be the means of saving us and the future.

J. C. Choate
Church of Christ
New Delhi
October 10, 1981

INTRODUCTION
FOR SECOND PRINTING

Ours is a time of upheavals, changes, and infightings. Our very faith is being challenged both from without and from within the church. Liberalism has become a popular trend and it is taking its toll. What shall we do? To whom shall we turn?

Of course those who are strongly grounded in the scriptures are still standing on the solid rock. They know what they believe and why they believe it. This is comforting indeed. But there are others who are not as well grounded and who are not as sure. In that case, there is no substitute for the scriptures. Understanding this, brother Bill Nicks has written a book which goes to the scriptures to show that the Christian evidences presented there are far superior to anything that the supporters of modernism can come up with.

Therefore, I would like to encourage you to read this book, to use it as a text book in classes with the young and old alike, to send it to those who are weak in the faith, and to use it in every way possible to help turn the tide. The Christian has every reason to believe and nothing to be ashamed of or to fear. We are the ones, then, who should be taking the offensive in these matters. Let us prepare ourselves so that we can do so.

J. C. Choate
Winona, Mississippi
January, 1985

PREFACE

The author has for several years seen the need for combating the liberal concept which denies the very foundations of Christianity. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit, David said, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). The foundations of Christianity have been attacked for centuries. Every generation has its own battles to fight. The soldier of Christ is "set for the defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1:16). The church has its foes both within and without who would like to see the foundations crumble and eventually be destroyed. They are agents of one about whose devices we are told not to be ignorant (II Cor. 2:11).

The author has taught several times a course in apologetics, called "Christian Evidences." These chapters are lessons presented to students at the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions. We believe young men who are well grounded in the basic concepts of Christianity will go forth to preach the gospel with firm convictions that what they preach is from heaven and not from men.

May these lessons be studied and taught, and improved upon, to the glory of God. We send them forth with the hope and prayer that all of us may stem the tide of liberalism and/or modernism, the fruit of which can only be the loss of our identity as true churches of the Lord. There have arisen destructive hobbies that have hurt the work of the church, but truly liberalism will destroy the church, by destroying its very foundations.

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Chapter One

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

We are as Christians commanded to be "ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear" (I Pet. 3:15). The word *answer* (from *apologia*) means a "verbal defense." It is the same word used in Acts 22:1 and 25:16 where Paul made his defense before the Jews and before Agrippa. These lessons are in the field of "apologetics" since they pertain to the defense of sacred persons and sacred things. We must be able to defend Christianity before an unbelieving world.

In this connection, faith according to Bible usage, does not mean the opposite of knowledge (Luke 1:4; Eph. 3:3, 4; I Tim. 4:1-3). It is an agnostic position to say that we cannot know there is a God. Correct reasoning leads to the conclusion that there is a God who created all things, "for the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:20-23). In the general revelation at creation, God made Himself known. The Gentiles could and should have known of his power and divinity. They were without excuse, for they had proof of His divinity, but had no proof of the divinity of their idolatrous objects of worship, which were the result of their vain reasonings and senseless (stupid) hearts. It is no less vain in our own times when men ignore the truth about God, and hold "science" as their god and their hope for security.

SOME CONCEPTIONS OF GOD

The atheist blatantly denies the existence of God. The skeptic doubts the existence of God. The agnostic denies the possibility of any true knowledge, thus everything is, to him, relative. The pantheist claims everything is God, even the trees and man and other creatures. The polytheist claims there are many gods. The monotheist believes there is one God. The deist admits there is a supreme being, but denies revelation, miracles, and providence. He believes that God acted with the world very much like one does with a clock when he winds it up and allows it to run down. Thus, to the deist, God has no intervention in affairs of the world, such as answering prayer, or exercising any providential guidance in the affairs of men. The dualist says there are two eternal principles struggling against each other, mind and matter, good and evil, whereas the monist says reality consists of only one substance, ideas or matter.

The Christian view is Biblical theism, which means there is one God, the God of the Bible. He is both transcendent and immanent. Webster's Dictionary has as its theological definition of transcendent, "of God, being prior to and exalted above the universe, apart from it" (Gen. 1:2; Matt. 3:13-17). He is obviously not wholly apart from the universe, as Deism affirms. He is also immanent, "the indwelling presence of God in the world, including man." He is not wholly immanent as pantheism suggests. The Christian holds God as both "there" and "here." He is omnipresent and omniscient (Psalm 139:1-12). Paul said that God "is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27).

WE MUST HAVE A CORRECT VIEW OF GOD TO BE SAVED

The full revelation of God to us has been made known by Jesus Christ. He came to "show us the Father" (John 14:9). He is the fullness "of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). We can learn from both Old and New Testaments concerning God. Psalm 14:1 says, "the fool has said in his heart: there is no God" and, in fact, the atheist must make the claim to universal knowledge, for if there is one truth he does not know, that truth may be the existence of God. The universal negative which he affirms is incapable of proof. He has a universe with no explanation. There must be a first cause, for dead, inert matter could not produce life. The God of the Bible is that cause. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The arguments for the existence of God are reasonable. Simply because God is invisible is no reason to deny his existence. Electricity is not seen, only its effects. Life cannot be seen, only the effects produced by life. We cannot see our spirits in our bodies. Not even if the body is dissected could the spirit be seen and put in a test tube for display. When one dies the spirit leaves (James 2:26), but the body weighs no more nor less than when the spirit was in the body. As the spirit is, so is God. In fact, "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). By figures of speech (anthropomorphism, anthropopathy) qualities of men and things are ascribed to God to help us see His nature. Thus, we read that God cares, as a loving father; He is a rock which shelters us; He has feathers and can protect us as a hen does her chicks, and can warm and shelter us, giving comfort. God has all good elements, it is impossible for Him to be evil, thus, he cannot lie (Heb. 6:18). He is omnipresent. If a performer on TV can be in the studio performing, and at the same time appear on the screen of your set in your room, surely God can be in heaven and also on the earth. He is where His purposes are expressed. We live according to laws God has given us. Trees blossom, babies are born, and children grow and learn. We can see God in the loving face of a mother caring for her children, and we can hear Him in the voice of the preacher who pleads for righteousness.

The arguments for God are reasonable from the standpoint of cause, or the Cosmological argument. The atheist must accept "spontaneous generation", an unreasonable supposition.

Science accepts the law of biogenesis, namely, that life comes from pre-existing life. To put it simply: "From nothing, nothing comes." The writer of Heb. 3:4 expresses this truth: "Every house is built by someone." A building presupposes a builder. It would be illogical to think that a city with a network of roads, waterworks, telephone system and sanitation system were all a happenstance. Every effect must have a cause. Rain is the effect, of which evaporation of tiny particles of moisture from the earth into condensed moisture is the cause. The body with its intricate blood, nerve and respiratory systems proves that some intelligent source is behind these marvels of our bodies. The cause of the universe must be an *adequate* cause. It is unreasonable to believe lifeless dirt planned all these. Even a child knows better. He sees a ball roll and looks for a cause. We see a muddy stream. We know a flea or gnat could not cause such. It is that a cow, big fish, or people wading could cause it. It is not reasonable that non-life (blob of protoplasm) could have produced life. As needles of the compass point to the north show there must be a north pole, so it is with God. There are millions of evidences that point toward Him as the "unmoved mover." He is both an intelligent and adequate cause behind all things, and all life.

God is reasonable from the standpoint of arrangement and design, called the teleological argument. Our cosmos (world) is not chaotic. The beautiful order and useful arrangement imply intelligence, purpose and design in the original cause. We may as logically say that Gray's, *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, or Paul's, I Cor. 13, were the result of throwing up the alphabet and coming down in these forms, as to say that the universe is a happenstance. The regularity in our planetary system demands a regulator. Halley's comet has happened every 76 years: 1682, 1758, 1835 and 1910. Such regularity proves an intelligent regulator. Every law has a lawmaker. Birds have wings, which indicates they were designed for flying. Corn, wheat and rice nourish millions, which is an indication they were designed for that purpose. If the design is present, there must be a designer. The human eye, with its retina, optic nerve, lens, pupil, iris and cornea show arrangement. That all of these working together give sight seems to be the design and purpose of the Designer. A designer of sight could not himself be blind.

Also, God is reasonable from the standpoint of simplicity. Scientists say the Law of Parsimony decrees that the simplest solution to a problem is to be chosen instead of the complex solutions. Belief in God provides the simplest explanation. What is the cause of the universe? Whence comes order? Design? Meaning of life? The desire for immortality? Belief in God explains all of these.

THE ABSURDITY OF ATHEISM

Atheism is forced to the position of believing in blind chance. To indicate how thin is the law of probabilities, let us raise the question: how many times would the 26 letters of the alphabet have to be thrown up for them to come down in order? Only once in 500 trillion times would they probably fall in order!

Those who deny the existence of God believe that man is a machine, with no responsibility for his conduct. Such a notion destroys the very basis of morality. It breaks down the will of man. If a machine in a factory breaks down, the engineers do not give a lecture to bolster the machine's "morale". They know machines have no moral judgments as does mankind. This very fact of a moral judgment within man is an indication of God, since a purely materialistic being could not produce a morally responsible human.

Typical of the atheistic beliefs in our modern universities is that displayed by a professor in the University of Illinois a few years ago.

He berated our traditional moral standards as hypocritical and "downright inhumane, moral standards engendered by a Christian code of ethics which was already decrepit in the days of Queen Victoria." This led him to say:

> Such behavior indicates an extreme degree of brainwashing by our religious and civil authorities in the name of virtue and purity, to the point where the students have become psychologically inhibited from satisfying their needs in more obvious and healthy ways. With modern contraceptives and medical advice readily available at the nearest drugstore, or at least a family physician, there is no valid reason why sexual intercourse should not be condoned among those sufficiently mature to engage in it without social consequences and without violating their own codes of morality and ethics.[1]

The atheist looks upon man as a mere animal, with perhaps a larger brain than the ape, but very little difference otherwise. Robert Owen, the Scottish skeptic, during the debate with Alexander Campbell, was visiting Campbell's

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1. Leo F. Koch, Asst. Prof. of Biology, The Daily Illini, Urbana, Ill., Mar. 18, 1960.

farm. He pointed to the ox in the field, and said, "I am like that ox. I have no fear in death." Campbell replied, "Yes, and like that ox, neither do you have any hope in death." Mr. Campbell continued: "You are on the level with that brute. He has fed till he is satisfied, and stands there in the shade whisking off the flies, and has neither hope nor fear in death."[2]

GOD IS SEEN THROUGH CHRIST

If there is no God, how can we account for the wonderful Christ? He came to reveal the Father to us, and is the way, the only way to God (John 14:6, 9). The Lord's day is a monument 2,000 years old to the resurrection of Christ (Rev. 1:10; Mark 16:9; Psalm 118:22-24). The Lord's Supper is a monument to His death on the cross (Matt. 26:26ff). Atheism tears down and accounts for nothing, neither conscience, morality, nor the beginning of life. Without God, there is no hope, joy, peace nor moral responsibility. Atheism can replace these with nothing but doubts, gloom and bestiality.

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[2] Robert Richardson, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell (Cincinnati: Standard Pub. Co., 1897), pp. 242f, Vol. II.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

One of the problems that atheism has emphasized is the problem of evil. If God is good, they say, why is evil allowed in the world? Why does God punish man for misdoings? Ralph Sockman once said, "the mystery of evil in a world ruled by God is not so baffling as the mystery of goodness in a godless world." The Bible teaches that the world has been cursed by sin (Gen. 3:17f) and by violating God's laws one brings evil on himself (Gal. 6:7). God can be all-powerful and all-good. He has providential purposes in allowing evil (John 9:1-3). One would have to be omniscient to say: "No good comes from evil." There are many evidences that good comes from evil (Job 42:1-17; Psalm 119:67, 71, 75; II Cor. 12:1-10; Heb. 12:5f).

Thomas B. Warren's book, *Have Atheists Proved There Is No God?* lists 22 propositions of Biblical theism basic to the problem of evil:

1. God is omnipotent.
2. God is perfect in goodness.
3. God is omniscient.
4. God is perfect in justice.
5. Evil exists.
6. Sin is the only intrinsic evil.
7. It is not evil that there is evil.

8. Evil results in every case from an abuse of the moral agency of man.
9. It is not the case that good is opposed to evil in such a way that a good thing always eliminates evil as far as it can.
10. It is not the case that there are no limits to what an omnipotent thing (being) can do.
11. It is not the case that a good, omnipotent thing eliminates evil completely.
12. A good, omnipotent thing exists.
13. It is not the case that there is a logical contradiction in the conjunction of proposition 12 and proposition 5.
14. This world is as good as any possible world for the purpose God had in creating (that is, to be the ideal environment for "soul-making").
15. Every instance of human suffering results from some condition(s) which was necessary to providing man with the environment of "soul-making."
16. God is not blameworthy for having created a world in which righteous and wicked persons suffer during earthly life.
17. God is not blameworthy for having created a world in which there seems (to some people, at least) to be dysteleological suffering.

18. Every instance of animal pain results from some condition(s) which was necessary to providing man with the ideal environment of "soul-making."
19. Every instance of natural calamities (tornadoes, earthquakes, etc.) results from some condition(s) which was necessary to providing man with the ideal environment of "soul-making."
20. Man's earthly life is a probationary period (that is, during which his fate in eternity is settled and it is his *only* probationary period).
21. Man is immortal (that is, man will live on after physical death in a non-probationary "period" which is non-ending).
22. The "stakes" in eternity (the blessings of heaven and the punishment of hell) are of such magnitude as to render all suffering in this life of no ultimate negative significance.[3]

These propositions were used with telling effect in both of his recent debates with Professors Flew and Matson, both of which debates are printed and on tapes. The author heard the latter debate and could sense the power of truth against the weakness of arguments made by an able man, but whose proposition to sustain atheism were no match for the arguments made in favor of God by Warren.

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[3] Thomas B. Warren, "Have Atheists Proved There Is No God?" (Jonesboro, Ark.: Nattional Christian Press, 1972), pp. 20-22.

ORIGIN OF MAN

Philosophy takes the sciences and synthesizes – deals with the problems. It is not in the field of science to deal with the origin of man. This puts the scientist in his place. Philosophy and/or revelation alone can deal with the origin of man.

> "Evolution is unproved and unprovable"[4] – Sir Arthur Keith.

Man's origin came about either through special creation or evolution. It is either/or, not both – (an argument from Warren-Matson Debate).

Proof of the Existence of God From Evolution Arguments:

1. Human beings owe their ultimate

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[4]. See Gospel Advocate, pp. 754-55; 1965, "Day Age Theory".

origin either to creation or to evolution.

2. Creation implies the existence of God; if creation is true, God exists.
3. Evolution implies either by birth or by transformation; i.e., the first human being was either born of some non-human, or was transformed from some non-human being.
4. But it is false that any human was born of any non-human thing (Matson admitted).
5. It is false that any human being was ever transformed from any ape or some other non-human things (Matson also admitted this).
6. It is clear that it is false that any human being was ever born of any non-human thing, or transformed from any non-human thing.
7. By DeMorgan's Theorem: "You move to say that it is false that by birth or transformation."
8. By logical form of "Modus Tollens," it follows that the theory of evolution is false.
9. By disjunctive syllogism, it is proved that human beings owe their ultimate origin to creation, and if so we have.

10. From premises stated, by Modus Ponens, the fact that God exists.
11. If God exists, then atheism is false, and since we know God does exist (by Modus Ponens), we know that atheism is false.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

“Existence of God”

1. Discuss I Pet. 3:15 pertaining to apologetics.

2. Does faith mean the opposite of knowledge in the Bible?

3. Give definitions for the following concepts of God:

   a. Atheist
   b. Skeptic
   c. Agnostic
   d. Pantheist
   e. Polytheist
   f. Deist
   g. Dualist
   h. Monist
   i. Monotheist
   j. Theist

4. Define:

   a. Transcendent
   b. Immanent
   c. Omnipresent
   d. Omniscient
   e. Anthropomorphism

5. Why is the atheist a fool?

6. What is the cosmological argument for the existence of God?

7. What is the teleological argument for the existence of God?

8. What is the law of Parsimony?

9. Give two proofs of the absurdity of atheism.

10. Answer the atheist's charge, "If God is good, why does he allow evil to exist?" (answer briefly and to the point.)

11. Why does evolution not belong in the realm of the scientist?

Chapter Two

CHRISTIANITY VS. MODERNISM

Before a consideration of modernism, let us first consider what Christianity is:

1. It is first a *revelation* (Heb. 1:1,2; 2:1-4; Jude 3).
2. It is *redemption* (Isa. 53; Matt. 1:21; 20:28; Titus 2:11-14).
3. It is *regeneration* (John 3:5; I Pet. 2:2; II Pet. 3:18; Titus 3:5).
4. It is the *redeemed life* following regeneration (John 15:2; Titus 2:11-14; Col. 3:1-4).
5. It is the *revealed rest* for the people of God (Heb. 4:8-11; Rev. 14:13).
6. It is *retribution*, reward for deeds done in the body (II Cor. 5:10; Gal. 6:6-8; Matt. 25:31ff; John 12:48).

Christianity is not merely a system of ideas, except as they are centered in the *person* of Christ. Yet His words hold the key to Himself, and are the means of communicating, making known His will and the will of His Father to mankind. To attack His word is to attack Christ; to attack Christ is to attack Christianity (John 12:48; Acts 9:1-4). Conversely, to accept His word by faith and to act upon it is to accept Christ. To proclaim His message to the world is to proclaim Christ. To proclaim Christ is to uphold Christianity (Acts 8:35; 8:5, 12f; 6:4, 8, 10, 11, 13; 7:51, 55, 59, 60).

DEFINITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MODERNISM

Basically, modernism (or liberalism) is a rejection of the inspiration of the Scriptures to harmonize the Bible with what is assumed to be modern science and thought. According to the modernist, God's revelation is not propositional, and cannot be expressed in verbal statements. They do not believe there is anything such as absolute truth, that there is any standard that is always applicable, and is final and ultimate.[1]

They believe we are always seekers, and that Biblical propositions are only relatively true. Ronald E. Osborn, a liberal of the Disciples of Christ, wrote of his "emancipation" from puritanism as follows:

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[1] Herman J. Otten, "Baal or God" (New Haven, Mo., Leader Pub. Co., 1965), pp. 9f.

To begin with, I have affirmed my liberation from puritanism. I say "hell" and "damn" rather more often than is good for the vigor of my English style and enjoy a type of funny story which once was not told in polite company . . . I must confess that my inner life lacks the sense of elation which characterizes the earnest Christian. I have too many questions about the life of prayer in a world of science, especially in a world so conscious of psychology, to give myself unreservedly to the kind of devotion which ante-dated our present sophistication.

I am also emancipated from Biblicism . . . The old timers in our churches could give a chapter and verse for everything we did and demanded a proof-text for every proposed innovation. The Bible was the infallible word of God and all man had to do was obey. It is a far cry from this old "cover to cover" faith to the knowledge of the Bible which I share with others in the seminary community. The impact of natural science, of evolutionary thought, of historical criticism, of demythologizing, of form criticism, has left us with a Bible utterly unlike the Book our mothers read . . . I now stand in icy

> loneliness and insecurity . . . ever acting without devastating reservations and doubts, I am left with nothing to trust, no glad cause to espouse, no unsullied banners to march under, no crusade, no historic assurance, no wave of the future.[2]

In regard to "puritanism", Leland Ryken showed in *Christianity Today,* Apr. 7, 1978, in an article entitled, "Were the Puritans Right About Sex," that these people had the same traditional views of morality which those of us who are Christians have, namely, that sex is to be withheld for marriage, as taught in the Bible. They did not actually teach that there is something intrinsically evil about sex, as modern "liberators" contend. We need to redeem the word "Puritan" from the meaning that it has today.

The word initially had little to do with morality in general or sexual behavior in particular. The Puritans wanted to purify the theology, liturgy, and ecclesiastical structure of the church, whether Catholic or Anglican in approach. At the root of all their reformation efforts was their acceptance of the Bible alone as the final authority for belief and conduct. In their own day, the Puritans were, as C. S. Lewis puts it, "the very opposite of those who bear that name today." They were . . . not old-fashioned or passe'. They were the angry young generation demanding a clean sweep of the medieval past and a radical return to Biblical Christianity . . . Although the Puritans placed sex within a context of marriage, they did not regard procreation as the only good reason for sexual relations between husband and wife. In this they differed from many of the Catholic churchmen. Augustine exerted a strong influence on the Catholic tradition when he asserted that the sexual act is free from sin only when its purpose is to produce offspring. Martin Luther had a different idea. "Propagation is not in our will and power, for no parents are able to foresee whether . . . they will bring forth a son or daughter . . . Creation is of God alone."

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[2] Ibid.

But the Puritans were prudes, right? Wrong. They insisted on the privacy of sex, not because they thought it wrong but because they thought it sacred . . . But didn't the Puritans have rules against various sexual practices, and doesn't this prove that they were opposed to sex? Yes and no. They had strict taboos against sexual perversions, including adultery, lechery, homosexuality, and sexual idolatry. In this they were merely following the Bible. It is a curiously superficial view, currently popular, that when Biblical and Puritan writers denounce sexual perversion they show a negative attitude toward sex. The reverse is true.

These writers are horrified by sexual perversion because they regard sex itself as good. Every culture protects what it regards as sacred with safeguards and taboos. A rule against stealing, for example, does not reflect a low view of property, but a high view of it; the prohibition of murder shows that a society regards life as sacred rather than cheap.[3] In this connection, Francis Shaeffer remarks:

> If there is no absolute moral standard, then one cannot say in a final sense that anything is right or wrong. By absolute we mean that which always applies, that which provides a final or ultimate standard. There must be an absolute if there are to be *morals*, and there must be an absolute if there are to be real *values*. If there is no absolute beyond man's ideas, then there is no final appeal to judge between individuals and groups whose moral judgments conflict. We are merely left with conflicting opinions.[4]

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[3] Leland Ryken, "Christianity Today", Apr. 7, 1978.

[4] Francis A. Shaeffer, "How Should We Then Live?" (Old Tappan, N. J., Fleming H. Ravell, 1976), pp. 144f.

He further points out that we must have absolutes if we are to have a solid epistemology (theory of knowing, or how we know we know). It is easy to see that if the Bible is not propositional and objective truth, we are without any normative standard for conduct, and there is no way to distinguish right from wrong. Thus, Communism would be as good as Christianity, or any system any nation or society devises would be just as good as the Biblical standard, even if they ordered the murder of 6 million Jews, as Germany did under World War II in the days of Hitler.

Modernism did not develop overnight. It gradually grew over a long period of time. Modernism claims a historical relationship and continuity with Christianity. Spinoza and Kant said, "The old foundations are no longer intellectually defensible and must therefore be abandoned." When men tried to harmonize Christianity with what was viewed as science, even to renouncing the supernatural (miracles, etc.), the result was modernism. As an example of how modernism crept into the Restoration movement, consider what happened at Lexington, Kentucky, after the death of J. W. McGarvey, one of the most brilliant authors the church has known. He fought against modernism in the College of the Bible for many years and was acclaimed as a leading exponent of the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. Hall L. Calhoun succeeded him as dean of the college, while R. H. Crossfield, President of Transylvania University, became head of the College of the Bible also. Brethren Fortune, Bower and Snoddy, teachers who had been educated in modernistic universities of the north, began to "spread the results of destructive criticism and Darwinian evolution among their classes." Crossfield defended the teachers, while Calhoun dissented. Calhoun in turn was forced out and returned to the Central Church in Nashville as an able defender of the faith among churches of Christ. The basis on which Richard M. Pope, teacher at the now Lexington Theological Seminary, defends the action of his predecessors is that they were trying to "relate constructively their faith to the new world of science, including evolution."[5] It is obvious how far the Disciples of Christ have departed from their original stand for restoration.

It is a tragedy of the first magnitude that millions of church goers are groping in the darkness of uncertainty because the truth in its absoluteness and purity is not being proclaimed. In countless pulpits, because the preacher is a modernist, the people are left in uncertainty.

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5. Richard M. Pope, "College of the Bible" (Lexington, Ky., College of the Bible, 1961), pp. 20-23.

Modernism has robbed the preacher of his faith; he now believes everything is relative, that there are no absolutes, and that we *cannot know the truth.* When God's truth is rejected as the absolute standard, man no longer knows the answers to life's greatest questions, namely, where did we come from? why are we here? where are we going?

A CONTRAST: CHRISTIANITY VS. MODERNISM

	Christianity		*Modernism*
A.	Christianity is a product of divine revelation. If not, there is no finality (Jude 3).	A.	Modernism denies divine revelation; to them it is evolution of men's experiences.
B.	Christianity involves redemption through the blood of Jesus (Heb. 2:9, 10).	B.	Modernism denies the atonement, affirming we are not saved from sin by the cross.

Christianity	Modernism
C. Christianity involves regeneration, from darkness to the kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13f).	C. Modernism says it is not the new birth, only an educational remolding of attitudes.
D. Christianity involves a redeemed life, a newness of life (Rom. 6:4; Tit. 2:11-14).	D. Modernism denies Christ's deity, blood, saying we need only good works, social gospel.
E. Christianity involves heaven for good, hell for bad, at end (Rev. 21:1-8; 22:14f).	E. Modernism believes there is no supernatural life, no recompense, good or bad.

WHAT MODERNISTS SAY ABOUT SACRED THINGS

1. **God.** One of the fundamental Biblical doctrines about God is that there are three personalities in the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is much Unitarianism in modern

Protestantism, as indicated by the following:

> I believe in a (single, eternal, all-inclusive, all-pervading Life Principle whose source and perfect embodiment is God, who finds varying degrees of embodiment in all forms of life, who is the prototype of every grace, power, and nobility found in his creation, and whom I call) God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, (not) his only Son, (for whose Son am I? But) our Lord, (because he is more nearly perfect embodiment of the Life Principle than any one I know;) who was (neither) conceived by the Holy Ghost, (nor) born of the virgin Mary, (but was conceived and born exactly as we are all conceived and born; and who) suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into (no) Hell, (for, as hell is not a place but a spiritual condition, he never saw the outer doormat of hell). The third day (the eager women found his tomb empty, and jumped to the conclusion that in the night) he rose again from the dead: he ascended into (no) heaven, (for as heaven is not a place but a spiritual condition, he never left heaven), and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty (if it is any comfort to

you,) From hence he shall come (if he is not already here) to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost (whom I call Holy Spirit, the spirit in which God works;) the holy Catholic church (so long as it tries to be holy and catholic;) the communion of (what) saints (there are;) the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body (if body means personality; not if body means mortal frame, for I am sick to death of my mortal frame, and hope to be rid of it soon;) and the life everlasting (meaning a change to finish out the interrupted opportunities of this life.) Amen. – Charles Edward Park, former pastor, First Church, Boston (Unitarian).

We trust the Unitarian doctrine and practice to leaven the inert mass of archaic religious opinion. The penetration has been accomplished and the leaven has worked wonderfully. – Charles W. Eliot, prominent Unitarian leader.

During the period of the Arian controversy it was said that the world had become Arian. Today it can be said that the so-called Protestant world has become Unitarian. – Francis Pieper, conservative Lutheran theologian.

> The doctrine of the Trinity, far from being established, is open to very serious criticism, because of both the modern understanding of the scriptures, and the inherent confusions of its expressions. – Cyril C. Richardson, Prof. of Union Theologial Seminary, Anglican.
>
> Bishops John A. T. Robinson (Honest to God), and James A. Pike, Paul Tillich and others reject the God of the Bible for some "projection", or "ultimate concern."[6]

Although many modernists are atheists, others are able only to give us a vague concept, so much so that we can hardly tell their meaning. He is to them, not a personal Being who loves us and has revealed Himself to us, but an impersonal being who has not spoken to man in propositional truth. They think of Christ as a mere man, fallible as are the rest of us, and whom they *correct* at every opportunity. But the moral character of Jesus shows their error. His miracles were obvious to the disciples, so much so that Peter had to say: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16).

It cannot be proved that he merely "accommodated Himself" to the Jews and their prejudices. Jesus was forthright in his denunciation of the Pharasaic traditions. Though He knew it meant death to Him, for the sake of reaching them with truth, he spoke plainly to them about their hypocrisy and wickedness (Matt. 23).[7]

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[6] Otten, op. cit., pp. 26-32.

2. **The Bible.** To the modernist, the Bible is not God's revealed will to man, but a record of man's religious experiences as he seeks after God. They believe it is an evolutionary development of the religious and moral life of men. This theory runs counter to Bible teaching, which affirms that when man abandons God, he descends to the life of degradation because God abandons him (Rom. 1:18-32). The Bible claims for itself inspiration (I Cor. 2:12f; II Tim. 3:16f; Gal. 1:11f; II Pet. 1:21), and that it is truly the word of God (I Thess. 2:13). The modernist likes to "demythologize" the Bible, and make all miracles appear to have a natural explanation. When a prophet seems to have prophetic powers of foretelling future events, they delight in "late-dating" or in making, for example, Isaiah become three Isaiahs, to fit their purposes. Jonah, to them, is a mere parable; the devil and evil

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7. James D. Bales, "Reasons For Our Faith", Harding College Book Store.

spirits were just drapery and part of the culture of their day which we can remove without harm to the general tenor of the Bible.

We cannot exalt Christ, while belittling His word. We do not exalt the Holy Spirit while reflecting upon His message which He revealed when sent from the Father for that purpose (John 14:26; 16:13). Jesus made faith in the word revealed through the apostles tantamount to believing in Him (Matt. 10:19; 10:40; Luke 24:49; John 12:48; Gal. 1:6-9; Eph. 3:1-12).

3. **Truth.** To the modernist, all truth is relative, not propositional, or public. It is subjective, not objective. Our Bible says, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23). The modernist says, "Oh, yes, it *is in us*." This leads them to "situation ethics," the belief that somehow God will reveal to you at the moment needed the truth you need to know. He does not speak through the Bible but to each one directly, and truth is different to each one. To the Christian, it is "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). To the modernist, one cannot know truth. To the Christian, "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

REVIEW QUESTIONS
"Christianity vs. Modernism"

1. Contrast six R's of Christianity with modernism.

2. What does modernism do to Christ?

3. Define modernism.

4. How did modernism sweep the College of the Bible in Lexington after the death of J. W. McGarvey?

5. What did Puritans teach about sex?

6. What did Francis Shaeffer say about an absolute moral standard?

7. Define epistemology.

8. What does the Unitarian say about the Godhead and Christ?

9. What is the modernist's concept of God? (Robinson, Pike, Tillich, etc.).

10. What is truth to the modernist? Contrast this with the Bible.

Chapter Three

EVOLUTION

There are two kinds of evolution: organic and theistic. The *organic evolutionist* is atheistic, or agnostic, or is some other kind of unbeliever in the Bible or in the God of the Bible. He opposes creation as revealed in the book of Genesis, and believes that the earth and life on it are the result of some kind of natural laws. The *theistic evolutionist* believes God created life and started the process in motion, then evolution took over from there.

Actually, Charles Darwin did not originate the idea of evolution. The ancient Babylonians and the Greek philosophers believed in the eternality of matter and, although they did not stress it, believed in evolution. Charles Lyell, who based his teaching of evolution on the theories of William Smith (1769-1839) and Baron Cuvier (1769-1832) before him, rejected creation, was a true evolutionist, and formed the foundations of the theories of Darwin (1809-1882). Erasmas Darwin (1731-1802), grandfather of Charles Darwin, wrote somewhat on evolution, but after Charles Darwin's, "The Origin of Species", was published, it became so popular, the idea spread like wildfire. Even though scientists today have learned that many ideas of Darwin were wrong, and they know they have not proved the theory to be true, they still accept it, believing some day it will be proven. Belief in evolution has enveloped nearly every textbook used in the modern school systems of our public school, not only in biology, but in history, geology and other branches of learning.

If the scientists were truly scientific, they would not teach evolution as a fact, since it has not been proved. Actually, evolution is a philosophy, and more particularly, a *speculative* philosophy. The reason so many theologians are modernists today is because they have accepted one or more of the speculative philosophies. Science has in the last 100 years made rapid strides in space, medicine, television as well as in the knowledge of atomic power. The scientist is highly venerated, and qualified teachers seriously teach it in most schools in such a way as to leave no doubt that evolution is a fact and that Christianity is irrelevant. The scientist has crossed over into the field of philosophy since no one was present at creation to weigh or place matter in a test tube for observation.

There is a kind of evolution that is credible: that large horses have evolved from small horses (the eohippus), and that hybrids have formed within the species. But leave the substance or animal alone, and each will go back to its original. For example, hybrid corn can be formed by mixing kinds of corn, but when they are untouched by human hands, they cannot continue to change, but will always return to the original type. The thing we are saying is that there is absolutely no evidence that fish change into land animals, or land animals into birds. The Biblical truth is the same as the truth in nature: that horses reproduce after their kind, men after their kind, and birds after their kind.

Evolution should be discarded as credible because it is a tenet of atheism, and hence of Communism, with its dialectial materialism. It is unscientific, yet atheists for the most part believe in it. Dr. George Wall, Harvard evolutionist, said, "There is no choice but spontaneous generation when we approach the origin of life. Yet spontaneous generation is impossible." Other scientists have affirmed that by applying the strict rules of science, it is impossible for life to merely happen, yet since life is present, they feel they must be illogical in the defense of evolution to support its existence. What they are saying is, "facts point us to deny evolution, but we affirm it as a fact anyway!" Evolution is a tenet of the Communistic dialectic, an ideology designed, not to merely damage, but to utterly destroy ruthlessly the spiritual strength of Christian civilization. Karl Marx taught that God is unnecessary in the socialistic state. Why should evolution continue to be taught in our schools?

Reports about man "originating" life have been misleading. DNA molecules in a test tube are from a virus which is life. When *Life* and *Time* magazines reported recently that life had been produced from a test tube, the impression left was that man had learned to "originate" life. Life can be multiplied from existing life, but only according to natural law that "life produces life." Evolutionists work hard to find "missing links" and have been known to "schematize" plates, and produce gigantic hoaxes, as the Piltdown Dawn man, in England.

Revelation is critical of speculative philosophy. It appeals to divine revelation as the source ultimately of all authority (Col. 2:3-10; I Tim. 6:20f; II John 9-11; Rom. 10:17; Matt. 7: 21-27). Christianity is not theoretical, but is a way of life. It is at war with "scientists" who are one-sided, and see life only a set of "facts." To the atheistic and communistic "scientist", there is no such thing as spiritual knowledge. Divine revelation is the only source containing the true answer to origins.

WHAT IS LIFE?

The scientist is unable to answer this question, *what is life?* Scripture gives the logical answer: "All things were made through Him; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1:3). We believe that by logical argument God can be proved to the inquiring mind to be the origin of all things. There have been two revelations from God, the general revelation at creation, and the special revelation of His word through the Old Testament prophets, and finally through Christ, and the inspired men of the New Testament (Rom. 1:18-32; II Tim. 3:16f). God has never left himself without witness, and even the ancient heathen could and should have known his everlasting power and divinity, for God "manifested it unto them," so that "they may be without excuse." In Acts 17, Paul declared God to be the "giver of life and breath and all things, and made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth."

The biologist who is the organic evolutionist must accept the eternality of matter, yet he knows by the second law of thermodynamics that matter is dissipating, and the universe is running down. This plainly shows scientifically that there had to be a beginning, a creation, but the scientist refuses to accept the Creator. In believing in the eternality of matter, he is forced to accept an illogical conclusion, something in which he does not believe.

Epistemology is the study about knowledge, and is concerned with theories about the sources, nature and validity of knowledge. In this realm the question is asked, "Is truth public (objective), or private (subjective)?" We rule out rationalism, for this is only the reasoning activity of the mind, and "it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23). We rule out empiricism, or obtaining knowledge through the five senses on the same basis. Then we rule out *intuition* on the basis of its being purely private and subjective mystical "insight". The only valid source of knowledge of origins is that of *authority*. This knowledge is from a mind outside the knower, it is objective and is revelation. Most knowledge we have comes to us this way, namely, the acceptance of testimony from an authoritative source. History and current facts are learned in this manner. It is foolish to deny the validity of authority and testimony. The Bible is testimony from inspired men who "spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God" (II Pet. 1:21). Why should we accept a theory, that which has not been proved, when it means we must in so doing reject the only valid source which can prove to us the explanation for the existence of the universe and all life? To accept the theory of evolution means we must reject the testimony of Moses, the author of Genesis. And theistic evolution is at the best a compromise. Some have not wanted to be regarded as ignorant, and, with an excessive desire to keep in step with science, so-called, have accepted a hybrid manner of thinking. They believe God created the universe, but that life evolved after creation of the first cells. In this manner, the soul of man cannot be explained, nor his purpose for being here. Evolution cuts man off from being made in the image of God. Evolutionists believe all changes come through natural law, therefore they reject the virgin birth, the miracles, the atonement, and the resurrection. These form the very heart of the gospel. One cannot hold to Christianity and evolution at the same time.

ARGUMENTS FOR EVOLUTION EXAMINED

1. **Evolution defined.** Evolution as commonly understood is that all forms of life on earth today came from someone, or a very few,

original, primitive forms of life by a connected series of changes, which at every point were only natural, and it is claimed that such changes will ultimately be completely explainable by science. It demands that there be no mind behind the universe and no power active in the history of life, other than that which is purely mechanistic and which is inherent in nature. This common understanding of evolution means more than the simple fact that some types of "change" have occurred and do occur! Changes are freely admitted, and it is beside the point for someone to define evolution as meaning only "change", and then glibly announce to the world, as has been done, that "science has proved evolution to be a fact." The evolution Biblical students and believers oppose is not the fact that "changes" between minor groupings of organisms occur, but rather the idea that such changes are of sufficient import to have produced the higher and more complex forms; and that actually all present life is derived from some *lowly primitive form of life by natural means only.* Douglas Dean makes the following wise comment: "A key point at issue is the meaning of the word 'kind' in Gen. 1:25:

> If *kind*, in Gen. 1:25, can mean *phylum*, or major grouping, without having to also include the term *species* (as science

> commonly defines it today), or *genera* (families), then science has certainly not proved Genesis wrong! We recognize that changes have occurred and do occur, by mutation or otherwise, among and within 'species' (as defined today) and even in other of the minor groupings, but there definitely is no evidence for any changes at all among and between the higher and more complex groupings; and if evolution were true, there would have to be necessarily such evidence. This means the 'facts' thus far collected by science do not at all contradict any claim made by Genesis in this respect." (*Arlington Lectures on Evolution*, 1966, p. 44).

2. **Comparative anatomy.** This deals with the resemblances between the human form and the form of animals of a lower nature. Scientists tell us the flipper of a whale, the wing of a bird, the leg of a cat, and the arm of a man are all homologous, not as seen outwardly, but by dissection. It is just as logical to conclude from this a common Creator, but evolutionists conclude that we all evolve from a common ancestor. But our view of a common Creator is more logical, since they cannot explain our differences, which are more than our similarities. Wayne Jackson says:

> But let me show you how silly this line of argumentation really is. Within the cells of all living organisms there are chromosomes which contain genes, the vehicles of heredity. In humans, the cells contain 46 chromosomes. But in the chimpanzee, for example, each cell contains 48 chromosomes. One might therefore assume on the basis of "comparative genetics", that this suggests a close kinship between man and the chimp. It is significant to note, however, that the *potato* also has 48 chromosomes, which means, if the comparison is valid, that we are as closely related to a "french fry" as we are to a chimpanzee! (*Fortify Your Faith*, p. 40).

3. **Paleontology.** This is the science of fossil remains of ancient living things. Paleontologists do find the fossils of animals, etc., that are now extinct, but there is no evidence that they evolved from one phylum to another. Dr. L. T. Moore, in *The Dogma of Evolution*, stated: "The more one studies paleontology, the more certain one becomes that evolution is based on faith alone; exactly the same sort of faith which it is necessary to have when one encounters the great mysteries of religion."

4. **Embryology.** Evolutionists say that the human embryo passes through all the stages it has come through from the primordial cell to the present state. This is the "recapitulation theory." They claim it resembles a fish in some stages, later an ape, etc. This theory was popularized by Ernest Haeckel, and other advocates since have been influenced by him. He is known to have placed a monkey embryo with a human embryo, and in this manner "schematize" his plates in putting out his pictures. His associates discovered this fraudulent practice, and he admitted it. But his books are still used. Even Carl Vogt, an atheist, denied this law. "This law (embryology) is absolutely and radically false" (*The Old Riddle and the New Answer*, p. 194).

5. **Vestigial Organs.** Evolutionists tell us we have in our bodies vestiges of organs that once were used in some stage of our existence, but in present state there is no such use for them. They say the vermiform appendix is the remains of a stomach used when we were wood eating animals. *Evolution Handbook*, International Christian Crusade, p. 30 states:

> In regard to this, it may be stated that the appendix is rich in lymphoid tissues, and is probably to serve as a protective organ against infection, especially during

early life. Sir Wilfred le Gros Clark of Oxford University has stated, "The significance of the vermiform appendix is still obscure but, in view of its rich blood supply and its histological differentiation, it is almost certainly correct to regard it rather as a specialized (and not a degenerate) structure." The fact that an organ may be removed without apparent ill results does not prove that it is useless. A man may live a useful life with only one leg or one eye but this does not mean that the other organ was useless.

Other bodily organs once thought to be useless, but now useful, are the tonsils, reputedly the remains of gills, the coccyx, remains of a tail, and the pineal gland, remains of an eye. The latter has now been found to be necessary to the growth of an individual, both physically and mentally. What if the pineal gland had been removed as a useless eye?

6. **Blood serology and anthropology.** Blood serology tests have been used to establish evolution, but evidence here is that all humans had a common human ancestry. Man's blood is in no way similar to his *supposed* ancestors. Genetic evidences show, as to how blood types

are inherited, the fact that in the first man and woman there were the genes which could produce all four blood types as we know them today: A, B, AB, and O.

In regard to origin of races, genetic evidence favors the existence of a common racial type from which all 190 or more racial types have emerged. Original genes placed in the first man and woman by our Creator were later selected to produce the many racial types of today. The facts of genetics support this idea. Genetic evidence is that the various racial types became established through adaptation to varying environmental situations. (Dean, *op cit.,* p. 48).

7. **Experiments of Breeders.** Evolutionists say that the selecting of the type desired of an animal, breeding for it, proves the theory of natural selection, which is the foundation of evolution. We admit that breeders can do this. They can produce the race horse, the draft horse, beef cattle and milk cattle . . . but this is *artificial* selection. It is done by man who chooses. If the animals were left to their own choice, would they keep the breeds distinct? The fact that there is some fluidity among the species, on the lower taxonomical scale, does not help the evolutionist. The reason for this is the fact that mutations are not productive of new traits in an

organism. In fact, they are nearly always harmful. We call them "birth defects" in the human, like sickle-cell anemia.

> Evolutionists have searched among genetic mutations for decades, trying to produce a new animal, but they always end up with the same basic animal they started with. You can bombard fruit flies with radioactivity and get all kinds of weird variations, many of them harmful, but you still end up with a fruit fly. (Arlie Hoover, *Fallacies of Evolution*, p. 36).

The fact remains that man cannot breed cows into hogs, or sheep into horses. Like begets like, and the evolutionist overlooks this. Artificial selection does not prove natural selection.

REFUTING EVOLUTION BY SIMPLE REASONING

Roy Deaver has the following in *Biblical Notes*, March 1979:

1. An investigator walks into a room. In one corner lies a body, a blood-spattered dead body. It is obvious that the person died instantly. Across the room, fifteen feet away, lies a shotgun. The gun has been fired, the barrel is still warm.

The gun is of such construction that it would have been impossible for the person now dead to have used the gun to shoot himself. Further, there are fingerprints of another person found on the gun.

2. From these facts the investigator concludes: (1) The person now dead was murdered; (2) he was probably murdered by the gun which was found; (3) there is, therefore, a murderer – outside the room – who can be identified by the prints found on the gun.

3. In this case the investigator was reasoning from an empirical fact (or from empirical facts) to a non-empirical fact(s) transcendent of, or *outside* the room from facts within the room. And this type of reasoning is sound.

4. It is possible for us to reason from an empirical fact (or from empirical facts) to a non-empirical fact (or to non-empirical facts) transcendent of our universe. In fact, this is the very type of reasoning done by the Holy Spirit (through Peter) as recorded in Acts 2:22-36 . . . Peter thus argues from facts observable among men to a fact transcendent of the earth . . .

THE BASIC ARGUMENT

1. We have mentioned earlier that God's *general* revelation includes (1) the *world* and *man*. (2) At the present time we intend to focus our attention upon *man*. Each human being is an empirical *fact*, and we intend to reason from this empirical fact to God Himself.

2. Each human being is a marvelously complex entity, being made up of many marvelously complex systems. The body includes (1) the skin system, (2) the skeletal system, (3) the muscular system, (4) the digestive system, (5) the circulatory system, (6) the respiratory system, (7) the excretory system, (8) the nervous and sensory system, (9) the reproductive system, (10) the endocrine gland system, and etc. Each of these systems has a very unique function, and each system must function in complete accord with every other system. The argument is as follows:

3. **Major Premise:** If there is even one characteristic, attribute, or property of even one human being which could have come into existence *only* by the creative power of God, then that one human being constitutes proof that God does exist.

4. **Minor Premise:** There *is* at least one characteristic, attribute, or property of at least one human being which could have come into existence *only* by the creative power of God.

Conclusion: That one human being constitutes proof (when the evidence is recognized and reasoned about properly) that God does exist.

This syllogism is *valid*. The first premise is obviously *true*. We proceed to prove the truthfulness of the second premise. (Note: This argument was used with telling force by brother Tom Warren, in both the Warren-Flew Debate and the Warren-Matson Debate. And, I hereby acknowledge my indebtedness to brother Warren for this precise statement of the argument).

THE HUMAN RESPIRATORY SYSTEM

1. In both the Warren-Flew Debate and the Warren-Matson Debate, brother Warren discussed in detail the "marvelous interchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the human respiratory system."

2. He explained: (1) The tension of oxygen is lower in the venous blood than it is in the alveolar air – but the venous blood has a higher tension of carbon dioxide. (2) The

pulmonary capillaries and the air in the alveoli are separated by membranes which are so delicate as to be freely permeable to these gases (oxygen and carbon dioxide). (3) The differences in the relevant pressures are favorable to a rapid inward diffusion of oxygen (from blood to alveolar air). (4) Without this amazing interchange no human being could live more than a few minutes. (5) Thus, the systems required to accomplish this interchange ***could not have evolved*** from nonliving matter, or even from some living thing (which did not have such systems).

3. Brother Warren set forth the argument as follows: (1) If the gaseous interchanges (i.e., oxygen and carbon dioxide) in the respiratory system of a human being possesses such properties (or involves such things) as to make it clear that such interchanges were not brought into being by any part of or the totality of dead matter, then the respiratory system of the human being (in which these interchanges occur) must have been brought into being by (the) Creator who transcends the universe – God Himself. (2) The gaseous interchanges in the respiratory system of a human being possess such properties (or involves such things) as to make it clear that such interchanges were not brought into being by any part of or the totality of dead matter.

(3) Therefore, the respiratory system of the human being (in which these changes occur) must have been brought into being by a (the) Creator who transcends the universe – God Himself! (*Biblical Notes*, pp. 137-140).

REVIEW QUESTIONS
"Evolution"

1. What are two basic kinds of evolution?

2. Did Charles Darwin originate the idea of evolution? Explain.

3. Why should evolution be discarded?

4. Why are so many theologians modernists today?

5. What kind of "evolution" is credible and what is incredible?

6. What does revelation say about speculative philosophy?

7. Explain the following branches of epistemology:

   a. Empiricism

   b. Intuition
   c. Rationalism
   d. Authority

8. Why can one not accept theistic evolution?

9. Define evolution.

10. Answer the comparative anatomy argument (briefly).

11. Answer the argument on paleontology.

12. Answer the argument on embryology.

13. Answer the argument on vestigial organs.

14. What does blood serology show?

15. What facts are revealed by anthropology?

16. Why does artificial selection not prove natural selection?

17. How can one refute evolution by simple reasoning?

18. Why does the human respiratory system prove a Creator?

Chapter Four

MODERN LIBERALISM AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. **Philosophers and their influence:** G. W. F. Hegel, a German philosopher, greatly influenced modernism. He did not believe in divine inspiration, but his new philosophy was the "dialectic", or two opposites in tension, the thesis and the antithesis. As these clash, the best in both is brought out in a synthesis, which in turn becomes a new thesis to be opposed, at which time the process begins all over again. Hegel is important for his influence on Karl Marx, father of Dialectical Materialism, which is espoused by Communism. Another philosopher, Ludwig Feurbach, a skeptic and critic of Christianity, claimed that man is what he eats, and held that Christianity is only a myth invented by man for his own psychological needs. Bruno Bauer was the father of modern theological modernism. He rejected supernaturalism without reservation. Soren Kierkegard, the father of existentialism, was a critic of Hegel, but borrowed Hegel's "dialectic" and applied it to his religious thought. Graf and Wellhausen, who led in the

modern movement of "form criticism", were the authors of the "documentary hypothesis." They, too, were influenced by Hegel, as well as Ritschl, both of whom rejected inspiration.

2. The influence of these modernistic writers has led into the modernistic beliefs of our day, that the Old Testament is merely the evolution of the experiences of the Israelites in their search for God, and is not to be taken as the inspired word of God. Those who hold to this view reject the account of creation as mythical, and hold to the belief in evolution of the earth and man, as well as all life. We see how they handle the various books of the Old Testament as follows:

THE DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS

The "four-document hypothesis," commonly referred to as the "Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis," held to the view that there were four principal sources, written by writers in different ages. The oldest material was called J because it used the name *Jahweh* (Jehovah), showing it was from the earliest times, consisting of the story of creation, fall of man, group of patriarchal narratives, some laws and history of Israel. The second document was called E because it used the name *El*, or *Elohim*, for God until the name *Yahweh* was revealed to Moses. It begins with Abraham rather than creation. They believe these traditions were written and collected in the Northern Kingdom about 750 B. C. They say this tradition pictures God as communicating with men through dreams and angels, rather than directly as J. The third tradition is called D, for Deuteronomy, an important document discovered in the Temple (II Kings 22:8-20). This denounced all other gods, prohibited pagan practices and threatened God's wrath for all the faithless to *Yahweh*. D is thus described as the "kernel" of the Old Testament. Gradually others' writings added to it until the whole Pentateuch was compiled. The fourth source, P, was so called because it was written by one with "priestly" concerns. Most of Leviticus is attributed to this source, as well as historical narratives, the creation account in Genesis 1, and numerous genealogies. They believe sometime after the exile (536 B. C.) and D and J and E sources were fitted into the framework of P, to form the complete Pentateuch.

3. Thus, it can be seen that the Mosaic authorship was rejected for some redactors later. With this reconstruction, they felt they had given a "life situation" for the literature of the Old

Testament. The solution has had an abiding influence on later students of the Old Testament especially in the International Critical Commentary is it seen, since it contains a literary-historical concern, with neither homiletical nor theological emphasis. (Willis, *The World and Literature of the Old Testament*, pp. 259f). Chaim Rabin says, in *The Composition of the Pentateuch, A Fresh Examination*, concerning the "documentary hypothesis": "We must reject the Documentary Theory as an explanation of the composition of the Pentateuch. The theory is complicated, artificial and anomalous. It is based on unproved assumptions. It uses unreliable criteria for the separation of the text into component documents" (p. 95). Walter Maier lists the following reasons for rejecting the theory:

1. It contradicts the plain statements of the Old Testament and of the New Testament that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch.

2. It contradicts the internal linguistics evidence of the Pentateuch.

3. It is a theory that has been built up by arbitrary and high-handed practices.

4. It is a theory that leads to absurdities.

5. It is a theory which is built upon a vicious and impossible principle, the evolution of religion, according to which the religion of the Israelites has been a gradual and natural growth from the lower to the higher, and which leaves no room or reason for the supernatural, the divine, the revealed. Such premises are repudiated by every conception of Bibliology and God which the scriptures contain. (Herman Otten, *Baal or God*, p. 180).

THE AUTHORSHIP OF ISAIAH

Because modernism rejects the predictive element of prophecy, they contend that the true Isaiah wrote only chapters 1-39, chapters 40-55 were written by "Deutero-Isaiah", and chapters 55-66 were written by "Trito-Isaiah." Rowley states that since Duhm's commentary in 1892 modern scholars believe in this division with three different writers. It is not that the latter two were actually named Isaiah, but that anonymous writers have their work included in the scroll of Isaiah. Whitehouse believes Deutero-Isaiah lived and wrote between 565 and 550 B. C., "before the ascendant star of Cyrus aroused the dying hopes of Israel." (*New Century Bible*, p. 21).

He places Trito-Isaiah to some date between 460 and 445 B. C. with advent of Nehemiah.

As a matter of fact, the modernist does not believe there is any prediction from prophecy, and that New Testament writers simply "applied" to the birth of Christ a similar event which took place nine months from the day it was uttered. This makes a clean sweep in the New Testament from Matt. 1:22 on of every "interpretation" of any Old Testament prediction of events recorded. In so doing, the modernist rejects the virgin birth, the atonement, as predicted in Isaiah 53, and his resurrection.

This is obviously not sound scholarship, since Isaiah is quoted in the New Testament more than all other prophets combined. New Testament writers do not doubt the authorship of Isaiah as modernists do. They state, for example, "That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (John 12:38). John quoted from Isa. 53:1. In the very next two verses he quotes from Isa. 6:9, "Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." They do not cut Isaiah into shreds, as per the modernists, and have one part by Isaiah and another by Deutero-Isaiah. John then added in 12:41, "These things saith Isaiah; when he saw his glory, and spake of him." Matthew also quotes from Isa. 40:3 and 53:4, reputedly the *second* Isaiah, but simply said, "For this is he that was spoken by the prophet Isaiah," and, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet" (Matt. 3:3; 8:17).

Cf. Mt. 3:3; Isa. 40:3
Mt. 8:17; Isa. 53:4
Mt. 12:17; Isa. 42:1
Cf. Mt. 13:15; Isa. 6:9, 80
Mt. 15:7; Isa. 29:13
Mt. 4:17; Isa. 61:1, 2

New Testament writers did not accept "Deutero-Trito" Isaiah theory! Edward J. Young, conservative scholar, said on this:

> The nature of these quotations and the manner in which Isaianic language appears in the New Testament, makes it clear that the entire book was before the inspired writers of the New Testament and that they regarded it as the work of the prophet Isaiah. To every Christian believer, this testimony should be decisive. (*An Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 203).

Joseph Addison Alexander, who wrote a monumental commentary on Isaiah in the last century, has this to say regarding the modern scholars:

> The successive writers of this modern school, however they may differ as to minor points among themselves, prove their identity of principle by holding that there cannot be distinct prophetic foresight of the distant future . . . it is really the *proton pseudos* of the whole school, and the only bond of unity between them. (*Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, p. 24).

In this writer's judgment, Isa. 7:14 refers to the virgin birth of Christ. I do not believe we have to concede to the modernist that this refers to a natural birth in Isaiah's time by stretching the meaning of *almah* to mean "a married woman," when it obviously refers to a virgin, and was so translated *parthenos* (unquestionably a *virgin*) in the Septuagint. These questions of Herman Otten are worthy of consideration: "What comfort could such a passage offer to Joseph who was troubled about Mary's conception when once before it had been fulfilled by natural intercourse? It would prove to him that Mary had been unfaithful to him. Or what assurance could such a quotation have for any reader of the Gospel of Matthew?" (*op. cit.*, p. 185).

In like manner, the higher critics reject Daniel as the author of the book. Instead of the 6th century prophet, they ascribe the book to someone in the 2nd century B. C. "whose hero was Daniel." (Gerald Larue, *As People Lived It*, p. 18). But Jesus regarded the real Daniel as the author, and quoted from Dan. 9:27 or 12:11, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand)" (Matt. 24:15). Some contend that Christ was merely accommodating himself to the erroneous popular views of his day. Also, some say that he may have been speaking about that of which he had no knowledge, as he did not know the time of his coming. However, Christ was silent of those things of which he had no knowledge in his human nature. And if he merely used the current tradition, he would either have been ignorant or deceptive. If in his human nature he had been ignorant of the authorship of Daniel, he would not have spoken it. If he knew it and spoke it anyway, he would have been guilty of deception. In either event, one would be impugning the purity of the Lord, which view we must reject.

The historicity of Jonah should not be

questioned inasmuch as it was accepted by the Lord Himself (Matt. 12:40; Luke 11:29-32). We must observe that Jesus accepted it as an actual account of something that really happened. Those who do not believe the book of Jonah are usually those who do not believe that Jesus rose from the dead. This is the comparison that Jesus makes, the experience of Jonah being to point forward to one "who is greater than Jonah."

THE OLD TESTAMENT IS INSPIRED

The following passages should convince the honest student of the Bible that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch: Exodus 24:4; 17:14; Num. 33:2; Deut. 9:10; 31:9, 24. The book of Joshua begins with God speaking to Joshua. "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest" (Josh. 1:7). That Jesus recognized the Mosaic authorship is also obvious, "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me" (John 5:46). See also Luke 16: 29-31; 24:27, 44; 20:28-38.

A. Higher Criticism Explained.

Higher criticism, as distinguished from textual criticism (the discovery and correction of clerical errors in the original text), is the art of ascertaining the authorship, date, credibility and literary characteristics of written documents. Being a legitimate art, it has been practiced by Biblical scholars for centuries, but only within the last two centuries has it been called by that name. Higher critics say that in the use of this tool for criticism they seek to revolutionize established beliefs regarding the Bible. They affirm that in their methodology "the ordinary laws of evidence and good sense must be our guide." (J. W. McGarvey, *The Authorship of Deuteronomy,* Standard Pub. Co., 1902, p. iv). They further affirm that when the meaning of the text is to be settled, they intend to "interpret it on the principles of sound exegesis."

The problem with this is that "common sense is an uncommon commodity." Unless men of learning use it, they will guide us in the wrong directions. It is no less a vice among men of learning as among those of their fellows who are less fortunate, nor are they always prone to follow "principles of sound exegesis." We conclude that *higher criticism* may seek to guide us by correct principles, but in practice has been dominated by extreme modernists, rationalists who tell us of "assured results," but whose employment of "the laws of evidence, the maxims of common sense, and the principles of sound exegesis" are highly in question. The unbelieving critics are actually "destructive critics" inasmuch as they would destroy the whole superstructure of Biblical faith. The JEDP philosophy of higher critics is a philosophy without merit. It dishonors God and leads to unbelief.

After answering the critics regarding their late date assigned to Deuteronomy in the first part of *The Authorship of Deuteronomy*, McGarvey shows in part two a positive approach to prove the Mosaic authorship. He shows that any written document is to be presumed valid as a genuine product of the said author unless the claim is proved to be false. Our courts of justice follow this practice regarding checks, notes of hand, deeds to real estate and wills unless the claim can be proved to be false. The burden of proof lies on him who calls it in question. Deut. 1:1 claims to be the words of Moses which he spake in a certain place at a certain specified time.

1. Although they refer to its oral delivery, they make Moses the author of what is written. Writers often used the third person in

speaking of themselves. Thus the direct testimony of the writer claims Mosaic authorship.

2. The preface to the second discourse, (4:44-49) shows the second discourse (5:1 - 26:19) to be Mosaic in authorship.

3. After the close of the second discourse, (27:1-26) Moses is said three times to be the principal speaker. Chapter 28 is a continuation of what Moses said in Chapter 27.

4. In the preface to the covenant (Chapters 29, 30), the words are explicitly ascribed to Moses. The 31st Chapter opens with "and Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel." Then the next seven verses of Chapter 31 show Moses encouraging the people and appointing Joshua as his successor.

5. In Deut. 31:9, 24-26, we have the specific statement that Moses commanded these words to be read at the end of every seven years, and that he wrote the words of this law in a book until they were finished, commanding the Levites to put the book by the side of the ark of the covenant as a witness "against thee." It is therefore vain to exclude any of these, such as the first four chapters, and ascribe to them a later origin.

The expression, "this law" is repeatedly found in every part, like links binding a chain into one.

6. Mosaic authorship is seen in the "Song of Moses" (31:19, 22, 30; 32:44), and to the one asserting he blessed the children of Israel with the blessing contained in the 33rd Chapter (33:1). The account of the death of Moses was likely written by some later writer or writers.

Some few, with an extreme view of inspiration, have expressed the opinion that Moses, by inspiration, wrote this account and these comments.

> Destructive critics have sometimes cited this fact, in order to throw discredit on the whole company of scholars who believe in the Mosaic authorship. This is unworthy of men claiming to be critics. We could well resort by quoting some of the silly opinions advanced by unskilled advocates of their own theory, of which many can be found, and hold their entire school responsible for these. (*Ibid.*, p. 199).

McGarvey then asserts, "unless this internal evidence shall be set aside by such proofs as have never yet been brought forth, it must stand good before the bar of enlightened opinion."

B. Indirect Testimony of the Author.

From Chapters 6-32 there are numerous references to entering the land, crossing over Jordan, etc., which, if written by later authors and ascribing them to Moses, would have been deception. If, as modernists assert, these words were written seven centuries later, the only conceivable reason why it contains so many positive assertions of its Mosaic authorship, was to make its readers believe that Moses wrote it, the real author or authors knowing perfectly well that he did no such thing, and, on this hypothesis, the only motive for introducing these varied expressions in the speeches about a future entrance into the promised land, was to add a superfluity of false evidence of the same false representation. And when we consider the large number of these allusions, and the varied forms in which they are presented, we find in them not only a superfluity of lying, but an ingenuity in framing falsehoods which are incredible because they surpass the cunning which any other spurious author has ever exhibited. No juggler ever displayed more cunning in devising his tricks of legerdemain. (*Ibid.,* pp. 201f).

Passages: 6:1, 10; 7:1; 11:29; 6:18; 8:1; 9:1; 10:11; 11:10f; 32:47; 12:10; 17:4; 18:9; 26:1; 19:2; 21:1, 23; 25:19; 27:2, 4; 31:3, 8; 31:13, 20.

REVIEW QUESTIONS
"Modern Liberalism and the Old Testament"

1. How did Hegel influence modernism?

2. Who is the "father" of modern theological modernism? What was his concept?

3. On whose theory did Graf-Welhausen base the Documentary Hypothesis?

4. Explain the JEDP theory and its fruits.

5. Give two of Maier's objections to it.

6. Explain and refute the Deutero-Trito Isaiah theory.

7. Explain the accommodating theory regarding Christ's quoting from Dan. 9:27 or 12:11.

8. What fatal error is involved in questioning the historicity of Jonah?

9. What fatal error is involved in rejecting the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch?

10. How has higher criticism become "destructive criticism"?

Chapter Five

NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS

The thesis of this chapter is to determine whether the writings of the New Testament are historically reliable. History is not all-important, but because certain events necessary to Christianity happened in Palestine during the days when Tiberius Ceasar was reigning as Emperor of Rome, Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee (Luke 3:1), this means Christianity is without doubt interwoven with history. If Christianity were merely a code of ethics, or a metaphysical system, such as Confucianism and the philosophy of Plato, which have merits independent of the life of Confucius and Plato, one could reason that it doesn't matter whether he believes Christ really lived or not, so long as he accepted its principles. However, acceptance of Christianity is determined by acceptance of a *person* who lived in history, Jesus, the Son of God, and his teachings revealed by inspired men, which constitute the gospel, or good news. The gospel is therefore bound up in history, and involves our telling of God's redemptive love which came down to man "in the fulness of time" (Gal. 4:4). To become a Christian, one was, and is, required to confess faith in this Jesus, incarnate, who worked miracles, and died for the sin of mankind, as the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:36-38). Christianity has its roots in history, the time when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea (John 19:1-16).

THE CHARACTER OF JESUS

F. F. Bruce quotes from W. E. H. Lecky (*History of European Morals*, ii, 1869, p. 88):

> The character of Jesus has not only been the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice and has exerted so deep an influence, that it may be truly said, that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind, than all the disquisition of philosophers and than all the exhortations of moralists. (*The New Testament Documents*, p. 8).

Lecky was a rationalist historian who did not believe in revealed religion, yet the character of Jesus can only be known through the New Testament records. We have the strange anomaly of one who thinks the New Testament records do not contain reliable information, yet he *relies* on them. Very often, as in the case of Josephus, for the sake of scholarship one will testify to the obvious, although he does not himself religiously ascribe to Christianity. This famous Jewish historian, taken to Rome as a pensioner of the emperor after helping Vespasian's son and successor in the siege of Jerusalem, Titus, wrote thus in the *Antiquities*, xviii, 3.3:

> And there arose about this time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed we should call him a man; for he was a doer of marvelous deeds, a teacher of men, who receive the truth with pleasure. He led away many Jews, and also many of the Greeks. This man was the Christ. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross on his impeachment by the chief men among us, those who had loved him at first did not cease; for he appeared to them on the third day alive again, the divine prophets having spoken these and thousands of other wonderful things about him: and even now the tribe of Christians, so named after him, has not yet died out.

This passage in Josephus *Antiquities*, an unbeliever, strengthens the historicity of Jesus as a real person, and therefore the documents written about him (and by his authority). Josephus bears witness to the date, Messianic claim, and reputation of Jesus as a wonder worker, also to his crucifixion under Pilate at the information of Jewish rulers, and his resurrection on the third day, as well as his being the founder of "the tribe of Christians." Josephus wrote this in connection with the troubles that arose during Pilate's rule as governor.

EVIDENCE FOR THE EARLY EXISTENCE OF NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

The Tubingen (Germany) school of thought, with F. C. Baur as its leading exponent of higher criticism, restated the origins of Christianity in terms of Hegel's philosophy. They thought the most important books of the New Testament did not exist before 130 A. D. Their conclusions were not based on historical evidence, but on philosophical presuppositions. Their errors were substantially answered in that day by Lightfoot, Tischendorf and Tregelles. In our day there is even more conclusive evidence for first century dating of the New Testament books, as seen by the following points:

1. **Evidence for the New Testament** is much greater than that of classical writings. There are in all about 4,000 Greek manuscripts

extant, either in part or whole, of the New Testament. The best and most important go back to about 350 A. D. The Vatican and Sinaitic (350 A. D.) and the Alexandrian (5th century) constitute the best of the oldest. Codex Bezae dates about the 5th or 6th century. By contrast, *Caesar's Gallic War* was composed between 58 and 50 B. C., but extant are only 9 or 10 good manuscripts, the oldest dating some 900 years after Caesar's day. Only 35 of the 142 books of the *Roman History of Livy* survive, with only 20 manuscripts, with only one fragment as old as the 4th century, while Livy wrote 59 B. C. to 17 A. D. Bruce (*op. cit.*, p. 16) lists also the scarcity of materials from Tacitus, Thucydides and Herodotus, some of which are as much as 1300 years later than the originals. He comments:

> Yet no classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thycydides is in question because the earliest MSS of their works which are of any use to us are over 1300 years later than the originals.

Our New Testament situation is so much better in this regard because we not only have the excellent MSS of the 4th century and two from the 5th, there are many fragments of papyrus dating back 200 years earlier which are in existence. There is the Chester Beatty Papyri, 100 years earlier, dating about the early 200's (four gospels and Acts, another with Paul's letters to churches and Hebrews), and a third fragment containing Revelation dating to about the late 200's. The John Ryland fragment containing John 18:31-33, 37f, dates around 130 A. D. The Bodmer II papyrus, containing the first fourteen chapters of John's gospel, dates to about 200 A. D. Thus, some writings extant date to within 40 years of the original!

2. **Quotations of the New Testament** by Apostolic Fathers (90-160 A. D.). It has been said that if the New Testament were lost, it could nearly be recompiled from the quotations of the Apostolic Fathers, writers between 90 and 160 A. D., some of whom were personally acquainted with the apostles, whose uninspired writings are filled with quotations from the New Testament writers, showing their familiarity with most books. There is the Epistle of Barnabas, about 100 A. D., the Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, about 100 A. D., Clement's letter to the Corinthians, 96 A. D. Letters written by Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (115 A. D.), Polycarp, a student of John the apostle (to Philippians, 120 A. D.). There is also evidence

in non-Christian writers, such as the Gnostic school of Valentinus, which shows acquaintance with the New Testament books before 150 A. D. Thus, even by heretics was the gospel venerated in early days.

3. **Textual Criticism.** This branch of study seeks to determine as accurately as possible from manuscript evidence the original words of the New Testament. Bruce says (*op. cit.,* p. 19):

> When we have documents like our New Testament writings copied and re-copied thousands of times, the scope for copyists' errors is so enormously increased that it is surprising there are no more than there actually are. Fortunately, if the great number of MSS increases the number of scribal errors, it increases proportionately the means of correcting such errors, so that the margin of doubt left in the process of recovering the exact original wording is not so large as might be feared; it is in truth remarkably small. The variant readings about which any doubt remains among textual critics of the New Testament affect no material question of historic fact or of Christian faith and practice.

There is no doubt that our New Testament is reliable.

4. **Evidence from Paul's writings:** Paul realized the deity of Jesus, his divine pre-existence (Col. 1:15f), yet he also knew Jesus was fully a human being as well (Gal. 4:4), and decendant of Abraham and of David (Rom. 9:5; 1:3). He knew Jesus lived under the Jewish law (Gal. 4:4), and He was betrayed, and on the night He was betrayed instituted the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:23ff). He knew Jesus suffered at the hands of Roman soldiers the agonizing death of the cross (Phil. 2:8; I Cor. 1:23), yet he also knew that the Jewish leaders were ultimately responsible for his death (I Thess. 2:15). He knew of His death, burial and resurrection and appearances for forty days afterwards, appearing to many eye witnesses, including five hundred brethren, the majority of whom were alive some twenty-five years after, when Paul wrote of it in I Cor. 15:4ff. He knew of the Lord's apostles (Gal. 1:17ff), and of Peter and James as "pillars" (Gal. 2:9), and also of the Lord's brothers, of whom James is likewise mentioned (Gal. 1:19; 2:9). He knew the Lord's brothers and apostles, including Peter, were married men (I Cor. 9:5), which agrees with the account in Matt. 8:14 and Mark 1:30. He often quotes sayings of Jesus, in his teaching on marriage and divorce (I Cor. 7:10), the right of gospel preachers to have their needs supplied

(I Cor. 9:14; I Tim. 5:18), and the words He used at the Lord's Supper's institution (I Cor. 11:23ff).

When he does not quote from Jesus, he shows a thoroughly familiar grasp of the content of the teachings of his Master, as he does in the ethical section of Romans (12:1 - 15:7), which is a summary of the Sermon on the Mount in practical application. The ethical imperative to Paul was the example of Christ Himself, whose character is in Paul's writings in agreement with His character as portrayed in the gospels by those who were apostles "in due season." Compare Paul's plea on the basis of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (II Cor. 10:1) with the Lord's words in Matt. 11:29, "I am meek and lowly in heart." Paul says Christ "pleased not Himself" (Rom. 15:3) which accords with the self-denying Christ of the gospels, who called on the apostles to deny themselves, and all of His followers (Mark 8:34). Paul said that Jesus "took the form of a slave" (Phil. 2:7), in perfect agreement with the character of Jesus as He stooped to wash the disciples' feet (John 13:4ff) and proclaimed, "I am among you as a servant" (Luke 22:27).

These facts give evidence that Paul's writings are in complete agreement with the writing of the gospel narratives, the purpose of which was the account of the life of Christ from eye witnesses. Since Paul proclaimed his complete independence of them, it is a fact pointing to the absolute credibility of Christianity; since Paul was not a companion with the other apostles, it is amazing that his testimony totally agrees with the original apostles.

George, Lord Lyttleton, an 18th century statesman, said, "the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove that Christianity is a divine revelation." (Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 77). Dr. Samuel Johnson wrote, in *Lives of the Poets: Lyttleton*, regarding Lyttleton's *Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul*:

> He had, in the pride of juvenile confidence, with the help of corrupt conversation, entertained doubts of the truth on Christianity; but he thought the time had now come when it was no longer fit to doubt or believe by chance, and applied himself seriously to the great question. His studies being honest, ended in conviction. He found that religion was true; and what he had learned he endeavored to teach (1747) by *Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul*; a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer. (*Ibid.*)

THE EVIDENCE FROM PAUL

The apostle Paul wrote many of his epistles earlier than 60 A. D., the time of his imprisonment in Rome. Yet, all gospel writers wrote after 60 A. D. Paul was a zealous Jew, a Pharisee, whose persecution of the church caused Christians to fear him. Something happened on the road to Damascus to thoroughly convince him of the error of his actions. Paul was well educated at the feet of Gamaliel, the greatest Rabbi of his day. He was more advanced than many of his contemporaries (Gal. 1:13f). He was not easily deceived. The evidence that led him to abandon his course of making havoc of the church was so highly impressive that it led him to reverse his course, and preach the unsearchable riches of Him of whom he had blasphemed. As a young man, Lord George Lyttleton had in his corrupt manner of life doubted the truth of Christianity. He later determined to study, and being honest in his study, was led to conviction, which he wrote in *Observation on the Conversion of St. Paul*, which has been a hallmark to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation.

In the writings of Paul there is perfect agreement with the writings of the four gospel narratives. Although Paul was not one of the original twelve, being as "a child born out of due season," the evidence is all the more impressive, inasmuch as he taught the same as they. "Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed" (I Cor. 15:11). Our New Testament is one harmonious system of faith. (Bruce, *op. cit.,* pp. 77f).

THE EVIDENCE FROM LUKE

Luke was a physician, and a Greek historian of no mean ability. In both Luke and Acts he shows remarkable accuracy, and even showing familiarity with names and titles of people of his day: Augustus, Tiberias, Claudius, three Caesars whom he mentions by names; Herod the Great, King of Judea; Quirinius, governor of Syria; Pilate, Sergius Paulus, Gallio, Felix, Festus are among other governors mentioned. Descendants of Herod the Great: Antipas, Agrippa I and II and Bernice and Drusilla are among his characters.

Sir William Ramsay started out on his archaeological studies of Asia Minor in 1878, assured of the Tubingen philosophy's theory that Acts was a product of the last or middle of the second century A. D. He became gradually assured that the New Testament was trustworthy, based on diligent comparison with archaeological finds. Here is his mature verdict:

> Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact

> trustworthy; he is possessed of the true historic sense; he fixes his mind on the idea and plan that rules in the evolution of history, and proportions the scale of his treatment to the importance of each incident. He seizes the important and critical events and shows their true nature at greater length, while he touches lightly or omits entirely much that was valueless for his purpose. In short, this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians. (Sir William Ramsay, *Luke the Physician*, pp. 177-79).

Among other writers who have testified as to the accuracy of Luke as a historian are Dr. Henry J. Cadbury (*The Book of Acts in History*, 1953 Lowell Lectures) and E. M. Blaiklock (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 1959).

These are remarkable testimonies to the accuracy of the New Testament documents inasmuch as the writings of Luke and Acts cover the period of our Lord's life, and also the first 30 years of the church, ending with the imprisonment of Paul, contain the main outline of the origins of Christianity, and lend proof to the reliability of the entire New Testament.

Luke explains the purpose of both Luke and Acts in the prologue to Luke (1:1-4), addressed to an unknown Theophilus. In addition to his inspiration through laying on of apostles' hands (Acts 8:17), he had access to excellent sources of information about events with which he dealt. Early tradition asserts he was a native of Antioch in Syria. (Bruce, *op. cit.*, p. 42). If this is true, he had access to learning from early members of the first Gentile church in Antioch (Acts 11:19ff). He may have met Peter who paid a visit there (Gal. 2:11ff). He seems to have had acquaintance with members of the Herod family due to his personal acquaintance with Manaen, foster brother of Herod Antipas, and one of the teachers of the church in Antioch (Acts 13:1). He also learned from Paul, and from Acts 16, was his traveling companion (notice "we" beginning Acts 16:10, 11). Luke spent two years in or near Palestine during Paul's last visit to Jerusalem and detention in Caesarea (Acts 24:27). He had unique opportunities to know the early church there. He met James, the Lord's brother, and probably other members of the family. It is believed much information Luke used came through Philip and his family in Caesarea (Acts 21:8f). Eusebius quotes Papias and other early writers as saying Philip's four prophetic daughters were famed in the early church as authorities for history of church activities. Luke and Acts are in accord with gospel writers and Paul's letters, covering the life of Christ and the first 30 years of the church, including the missionary life of Paul.

REVIEW QUESTIONS
"New Testament Documents"

1. Why is history important in Christianity?

2. How does the character of Jesus sustain Christianity?

3. How did the Tubingen (Germany) school restate the origins of Christianity?

4. Show evidence for the New Testament being greater than classical writings.

5. What evidence is seen in writings of post apostolic fathers (90-180 A. D.)?

6. How does textual criticism show reliability of the New Testament?

7. Give some evidence that Paul's writings are in agreement with gospel writers.

8. Give evidence from Paul's conversion of his reliability.

9. Give evidence from Luke, the physician.

10. Give Ramsey's testimony regarding Luke.

Chapter Six

FIRST CENTURY UNITY, SECOND CENTURY CHRISTIANITY, APOLOGISTS, HERETICS AND THE LIBERAL RECONSTRUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to show that there was a unity (orthodoxy) of apostolic teaching in the first century, but there were departures in non-apostolic writings, as well as apologists for apostolic writings. Heresies which date to a time soon after the apostles, and perhaps even contemporary with them (I John is believed to be a reply to this ancient heresy of Gnosticism), paved the way for later Liberal, or Modernistic Reconstruction.

FIRST CENTURY UNITY

(Thoughts from this section have been obtained from *History of the Christian Church,* by Philip Schaff, I, pp. 510-68; 432-36).

Although there was no conscious logical arrangement, apostolic teaching is characterized by internal order and consistency, blending into marvelous unity. It was a gradual revelation over some 60 year period (33-96 A. D.). The faith was "once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). Though the Holy Spirit allowed difference of styles of the authors, still there is harmony. Like their Creator, their work was a work of art, harmonious and inerrant.

There are different styles of apostolic teaching:

1. **The Jewish Christian Style.** This was represented by Peter, James, Matthew and Mark. James holds more closely to the law, yet refers to the gospel as the "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25; 2:12). He has been called "the Christian legalist." He stresses works, but as a fruit of Christian faith. Paul and James supplement, not contradict, on this point. James looks at the fruit, Paul at the root. Peter's message is Christ-centered and practical. It stands between James and Paul, between two different kinds of emphasis.

2. **Gentile Christian Style.** This is represented by Paul and the gospel of faith. His teaching is soteriological, or a system and way of salvation. The theme of Romans, the most scientific treatise is: the gospel of Christ, the power of God for salvation of all men, both Jew and Gentile. Luke and Acts, written by Luke, the physician-

historian, has a wide appeal to Gentiles because of his accuracy pertaining to characters, many of whom were world political figures of the day.

3. **John and the Gospel of Love.** The central truth of John is the incarnation of the eternal Logos, Christ, and the many events in His life which verify His "I Am" claims. John's message starts with Christ's person, Paul's from Christ's work, but both agree. John emphasizes the church triumphant; Paul the church militant. But each assures us of final victory.

There was not one gospel for Jews, another for Gentiles, but as Peter said to the house of Cornelius, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him" (Acts 10:34). He later reminisced of his preaching to the Gentile house of Cornelius, "And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8, 9). The middle wall had been broken down; Jew and Gentile were now blended into "one body" (Eph. 2:14-16) and "all made to drink of one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:13). There was "one body" (the church), "one Spirit" (the Holy Spirit), "one faith" (the gospel), and this was the pattern God planned for all centuries, established in the first century (Eph. 4:4f).

SECOND CENTURY CHRISTIANITY

(Research for this section obtained from *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia,* III, pp. 1896-1904; and Neve's *History of Christian Thought*, I, pp. 34-43).

Writers of the post-apostolic period from A. D. 90-140 are called "Apostolic Fathers." Some were disciples of some of the apostles. Their significance is in the fact they are the beginning of the *history* of Christian doctrine, not the doctrine itself, but the records of uninspired men who speak of, and quote from, the apostolic writings. The view of the modernist is that the writings of the apostolic fathers are a continuation of writings of the apostles, neither of whom are inspired, that is, divinely inspired. Yet the modernist gives more critical attention to the New Testament than to the post-apostolic "fathers." The Roman Catholic use of the Father is that they represent not what the fathers saw in the scriptures, but what churches had held from the beginning, thus the writings of the Fathers constitute "Church Tradition, and Infallibility of the Church." Catholic doctrine is that the writings of the *Fathers* is on a par with that of the *apostles*, both inspired.

Their writings are as follows:

1. **First Letter of Clement**, 96 or 97 A. D., by Clement of Rome. It contains moral instructions; Clement has been accused of legalism. Critics fail to see harmony between Clement and Paul.

2. **Shepherd of Hermas**, between 97 and 140 A. D., by a member of the Roman church. It is allegorical; the church is seen as an ancient lady; it was considered canonical at one time, but one objection is based on the fact it was "written in our time (2nd century) by a certain Hermas, brother of Pius, bishop of Rome."

3. **Seven Letters of Bishop Ignatius of Antioch**, between 110-115 A. D. Addressed to churches in Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, Smyrna, and to the Bishop of Smyrna, it (they) contains interesting thoughts on Christ's pre-existence, the reality of His incarnation, on the Christian as "God-bearer", and on the church and the bishop as representative of the church's unity.

4. **The Letter of Bishop Polycarp of Smyrna**, 155 A. D. to the church at Philippi.

Polycarp is thought to have been a disciple of John, the apostle. He quotes from I John, but not the gospel of John. Unlike Ignatius, he omits teaching the duty of submission to bishops.

5. **Letter of Barnabas,** 70-138 A. D., probably around 100 A. D., the author is unknown. It is anti-Judaistic, and contains many doubtful allegories based on the Old Testament. He sees baptism as the culmination of faith; he is premillennial, and predicts the second advent of Christ in the 6000th year.

6. **Second Letter of Clement,** c. 150 A. D., author unknown, not Clement of Rome. It is strongly legalistic, alludes to much of the canon, also to some lost books.

7. **Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord,** c. 125, Papias of Hierapolis. Papias was a close friend of Polycarp, strongly chiliastic, and only a few fragments are extant of this.

8. **The Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,** 90-165 A. D., probably 112 A. D. The author is unknown; it is a manual for catechists and congregations. The first part contains moral precepts, the Two Ways, Life and Death. The Second Part has rules for worship

and congregational life. There are also eucharistic prayers, teaching against abortion, child exposure, and is legalistic.

9. **The Preaching of Peter,** 110-130, a pseudonymous work. It is a so-called missionary sermon of Peter. Only fragments are extant. (See Alexander Roberts, et al, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, I, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. for more information on each of these).

The **Apologists:** These were men who rose to the defense of the faith once delivered. Among them were:

1. **Justin Martyr,** 114-163. He was born in Palestinian Syria, and martyred by Junius Rusticus, perfect of Rome, for his faith in Christ. His works were: *Two Apologies,* and *Dialogue With Trypho,* along with five minor works. He held the following doctrinal positions: believed in God, Christ, the Logos, the Kingdom as the church, inspiration of the Bible, essentiality of baptism, simplicity of worship, high ethics, free will, cessation of the law, immortality of the soul, final resurrection and judgment. Along with these sound positions, he held the following dubious positions: some fringe views of Christ,

premillennialism, doubtful analogies from the Old Testament, and miracles after the death of apostles. (Alexander Roberts, *op. cit.,* pp. 100-303).

2. **Athanagoras,** wrote c. 177. His works were: *A Petition for Christians,* addressed to Marcus Aurelius: also a treatise *On the Resurrection.* His discourse to Marcus Aurelius answers charges against Christians for incest and cannibalism. He attacks pagan idolatry. His discourse on the Resurrection answers objections to the doctrine. He attempts to prove by God's purpose in creation of man His justice, and the nature of man himself. He was a powerful and clear writer. (*Encyclopedia Britannica,* 9th Ed., Vol. II, p. 832).

3. **Tatian, Theophilus, and Marcianus Aristides.** Tatian of Syria wrote an address to the Greeks c. 150 containing a severe criticism of paganism. Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, wrote three books to Autolykos, a friend, c. 190 A. D. Aristides, referred to as an Athenian philosopher in the Chronicle of Eusebius, addressed an *Apology* to Emperor Antonius Pius. c. 150 A. D.

4. **General characteristics of Apologists:** A. C. McGiffert, *History of Christian Thought,*

pp. 122-131, and Neve, *op. cit.*, p. 49, make the following comments: "Their definitions of God were abstract, metaphysical, but practical. Philosophical in form, but wealth of the New Testament piety behind them. They set a bad example for succeeding generations in philosophical approach." We must take the writings of the uninspired apologists, as we do all men today who write, namely, measure their teachings by the perfect standard of the New Testament, the only inerrant writing extant since Christ.

The **Heresies** are:

1. **The Gnostics.** This movement arose within paganism in an effort to syncretize Christianity with pagan religions. Their elements were heathen religions, Judaism, and Christianity fused together, with Christian features badly distorted. The Valentinian theory of Gnosticism held that there was a spirit world and matter world. The demiurge (Creator) sent aeons emanating from the spirit world, the farther away they were from the Creator, the more corrupt, thus the world was essentially evil. Their *apparent* high estimate of Christ deceived many Christians. Some denied the deity of Christ; others His humanity. Unlike the Jews who denied His deity, the Gnostic denied His humanity. The Docetic

Gnostics denied the actual humanity of Jesus, and the Cerinthian Gnostics attempted to distinguish between the man Jesus and the Christ whom they alleged descended upon Jesus at His baptism and left Him at His cross. *Gnostic,* from the Greek, *gnosis,* means knowledge. They claimed superior knowledge. They regarded evil as an ever present characteristic of matter, thus they could not accept the incarnation of Jesus. A sinless Jesus could not occupy a material body. They argued that the body is not real, but an illusion, thus, the sufferings on the cross were apparent but not actual. Practically, and especially pernicious to the early Christians, was the course of conduct pursued by Gnosticism's devotees. They were exceedingly wicked and vile. They contended that once they were regenerated and possessed the secret "knowledge," they were automatically pure in spirit, no matter what the body did, since it was inherently evil anyway. The story is told by Irenaeus about Polycarp being with John the apostle in a bathhouse. They saw Cerinthus, the Gnostic. John reputedly said, "Let us flee Cerinthus lest it fall, since Cerinthus, the enemy of truth is there." The epistle of I John is reputedly a reply to Gnosticism. "My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that doeth sin is of the devil" (I John 3:7f). In Gnosticism, there is no place for the resurrection, the final judgment. It is a philosophy, a mystery religion. Its effects were to lead the church to assert the universality of its own position, and to settle the question of the contents of the Old and New Testament canons. It also led to creeds, and raised up some able defenders.

Marcion, another heretic, rejected all of the Old Testament. He accepted only a mutilated gospel of Luke, and ten of the epistles of Paul. It is believed his heresy was brought on by the legalism of some of the church fathers, as a reaction against them.

Another heresy was **Montanism**, which appeared with Montanus, a converted pagan priest, c. 156 A. D. He claimed to be a prophet, and was acknowledged as such by some of the church fathers. He declared himself to be a manifestation of the Paraclete of John 14, declaring the period of revelation was closing (with him) after which was coming the end. He held to stern morals, such as fasting, preparation for martyrdom, and forbade second marriages. He was joined by two women, Maximilla and Priscilla, who had deserted their husbands with his sanction. This heresy paved the way for a series of movements: the Novatians, the Donatists, the Waldensians, the fanatics of the Reformation movement, and the modern Holiness movements. The elimination of Montanism strengthened the position of bishops, and raised moral standards. A double standard emerged, one for clergy and one for the "laity." Premillennialism was discredited due to the fanaticism of the Montanists.

2. **Overcoming heresy.** Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, Gaul, in the latter part of the second century was a great opponent of Gnosticism. He set up standards by which the truth might be judged as to their apostolicity. He appealed to apostolic tradition to ascertain apostolic authority. He appealed to episcopal infallibility to determine the extent of Scripture canon and creed, and thus to bind the conscience of the church. In this manner he could summarily deal with heretics. But the church was shackled, and free theological discussion was impossible. Since appeal was to the past, all sorts of traditions sprang up. But this meant the permanent loss of that primitive trust in present day revelation, and return to the idea that there was no more direct revelation after the Apostles.

3. **Germs of the Papacy.** This was rooted in public opinion and a need for unity in the early church. Hippolytus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Rome, Irenaeus, Ignatius, and Firmilian held

more or less clearly fundamental concepts of the papacy. At first this was not explained so much in the ambition of leaders as in antiheresy. There were several schisms in the church in Rome, Carthage and Egypt from 235-305 A. D. Heresy led to the development of catholic theology, that is, a universal acceptance of the canon of the 27 books of the New Testament. Thorough investigation of modern theology has been unable to unsettle the faith of Christians regarding these 27 books of the New Testament.

THE LIBERAL RECONSTRUCTION

The basis upon which the liberal reconstruction occurred was from the standpoint of origins, not origin. To them there was an alleged antagonism in the apostolic church. It was at Tubingen, Germany, in 1830, that marked the beginning of the modern critical movement, after which it spread abroad. With Professor Baur as leader, this school of thought applied Hegel's dialectical philosophy. The thesis was Jewish Christianity under Peter, and the antithesis, Gentile Christianity under Paul. The synthesis was reached in the day of Irenaeus (180 A. D.). From this viewpoint, there was no "orthodoxy" until the latter part of the 2nd century. As we have seen, this was not based on historical evidence, but upon philosophy, Hegel's theory of progress. Their basic authority was reason and experience, resulting in Theistic Humanistic Naturalism. The basic object of this movement was to reject the obvious supernatural, including all miracles pertaining to Christ and the apostles. To them, the Bible was not an inspired message, but simply the struggles and experiences of human beings to search for God.

The Abingdon Bible Commentary, edited by Carl Eiselen, 1929, representing scholarly views among the Methodists, holds the following modernistic positions:

1. New Testament writers wrote on assumptions, p. 32.

2. The Documentary Hypothesis (Moses not the author of Pentateuch), pp. 136-138, 145ff.

3. Isaiah was not the author of all of Isaiah, pp. 626-638.

4. Daniel was not the author of Daniel, p. 747.

5. The Jonah story was only a parable, or allegory, not literal, p. 788.

6. The Four Document Hypothesis of the Gospels, pp. 867-873.

7. They accept modern criticism, rejecting inspiration, pp. 885-890.

8. The New Testament is not a valid, divinely inspired book, p. 889. (Its writers expressed selves as humans as their times afforded).

9. Jesus did not have perfect knowledge, p. 898.

10. Rationalization of miracles, pp. 923-925.

11. Paul's writings were not verbally inspired, p. 931.

12. Article 5 of Methodist church was perverted which said "belief of whole of scriptures was necessary to salvation," and "not all things of the New Testament are of equal value . . . and therefore not all things are of equal authority" p. 949.

13. The early church and its writers misrepresented Jesus in Matt. 24.

The treatment according to modernistic concepts, which the Abingdon commentary holds, leads them to the above untenable positions. On pages 944-950, they affirm that the New Testament is a late product of the Christian movement, that the historic facts were early, but doctrine *developed*. This fits Hegel's theory of progress. They hold that the bishops of the monarchial episcopate were authoritative interpreters of the faith. B. H. Streeter, who held to the four document theory of the synoptic gospels, and which is the standard modernistic answer, says, "The history of catholic Christianity during the first five centuries is the history of progressive standardization of a diversity, which had its origin in the apostolic age" (*The Primitive Church*, p. 50).

REFUTATION OF THE LIBERAL RECONSTRUCTION

That the above positions are purely naturalistic, rejecting the inspiration of the New Testament, and hence are in error, may be seen from the following facts:

1. Paul's testimony in Galatians, Romans 1, and II Corinthians prove the leading facts in the life and mission of Christ and the church.

2. Paul's conversion is an outstanding proof, so impressive to him as to reverse his entire course and preach Him whom he had once blasphemed.

3. There was essential doctrinal and spiritual harmony between Paul and the elder apostles in spite of differences of opinions (Acts 15). Paul's collision with Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14) proves the opposite of a dialectical tension. This was not a difference in principle, but it demonstrated the inconsistency of Peter's conduct. The silent submission of Peter, and later allusions to each other as brethren prove this to be true (Gal. 1:18f; I Cor. 9:5; II Pet. 3:15f).

Mark and Silas served both Paul and Peter in their common work of preaching the same gospel. Galatians is a connecting link, confirming the account in Acts and proves the harmony. This explodes the theory that Peter and Paul stood as Ebionites and Marcionites. There was essential harmony among the apostles, thus orthodoxy, in their day. The church was not accidental, dependent on human contingencies, but was according to the divine plan "before times eternal" (Eph. 3:10f).

REVIEW QUESTIONS
"First Century Unity, Second Century Christianity, Apologists, Heretics And The Liberal Reconstruction"

1. Harmonize first century unity in Peter, Paul and John.

2. Name three writers of the post apostolic period, and one of the writings of each.

3. Name three post apostolic early apologists, and one of the writings of each.

4. How did they, even though nobly defending Christianity, set a bad example for succeeding generations?

5. Distinguish Docetic and Cerinthian gnosticism.

6. What led to bad ethics in gnosticism?

7. What was Marcion's heresy?

8. What was the heresy of Montanus?

9. What apologist in A. D. 180 was a

great opponent of gnosticism?

10. What evil came from his fight and what good?

11. How did germs of the Papacy arise in the second century?

12. What was the basis (and is still among many) of the liberal reconstruction?

13. Explain the liberal reconstruction from this viewpoint.

14. Give three refutations of the liberal reconstruction.

Chapter Seven

THE EARLY CHURCH, LIBERAL RECONSTRUCTION AND EXISTENTIALISM

The purpose of this chapter is to show the fallacies of the liberal reconstruction, first, by pointing out the proper construction, or establishment of the church, as contrasted with the liberal idea, and how existentialism (dialectic theology, or crisis theology) developed.

It is important to point out that Jesus was the only founder and head of the church which He built. He is not the co-founder with Paul, as the modernists claim. According to prophecy (Isa. 2:2-4; Dan. 2:44), the church of Christ was established on Pentecost and just after the resurrection of Christ, A. D. 33. Jesus had promised the kingdom would come with power (Mark 9:1) and that power would be given when the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 1:8) to the apostles. The converging of these occurred on Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, thus fulfilling Jesus' promise to "build my church" (Matt. 16:18). Before Pentecost, the church was in the future, and the disciples were asked to pray "thy kingdom come"

(Matt. 6:9). After Pentecost, passages referring to the church, or kingdom, were spoken of as an historical fact (Rev. 1:9; Col. 1:13f; Acts 8:1; 9:1; 2:47).

The apostles had been eye witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, thus their evidence was the best that could be found, not tertiary, or even secondhand, but reliable firsthand witnesses. Christ had chosen them, and it was to them that He sent the Holy Spirit according to promise (Luke 24:49) after His ascension and glorification (John 7:39). This was the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel (2: 28-30). Liberal theology admits that the resurrection of Christ is "the most baffling of all historical and theological problems" and they have not, nor did they have then, an explanation for the empty tomb. It is characteristic of liberalism to deny the obvious supernatural. The resurrection is indeed the climax in a chain of proofs attesting to the divinity of Christianity.

The liberal view of Christ is that the early Christians, by a *natural accretion* of their minds, invented the idea of Christ. If this be so, how does one explain the endurances of Christians under persecution, and the willingness to die for Christ? One does not die for the imaginary. Paul, an intelligent, rational, well-educated Pharisee (Gal. 1:13f; Acts 26:9ff) was not easily deceived, yet experienced a radical change after his conversion, preceded by the appearance of Christ to him on the Damascus road (Acts 9: 1-17). He became an ardent missionary for the faith of which he had once made havoc, and rejoiced in his sufferings for Christ (Col. 1:24). It is not reasonable that he would be willing to suffer the many hardships of beatings, imprisonment, and many other perils for the sake of a cause which he had imagined. In fact, it is not possible that man could have invented Christ. Men are imperfect; how could the imperfect reason to the perfect being? This would require a community of Genii which would be harder to explain than the genuine first century explanation. The scheme of redemption had to be a revelation from God (Gal. 1:11f; I Cor. 2:11f).

Historically, there was a first century unity with Paul and Peter in unison in doctrine. The liberal dialectic tension between Pauline and Petrine theology is a figment of the liberal philosophy, not according to historical fact. Liberals compare Paul and Peter to the ancient heretics, the Ebionites and Marcionites. The *Ebionites* opposed Paul's universal preaching and his law-free gospel. They believed complete salvation can be secured through Judaism only. Justin gives the clearest picture. He says there were two kinds of Jewish Christians, one saying the law was binding only on those who were Jews by birth, the other insisting the law was bound on Gentiles also. It is probably correct to call the latter Ebionites. (*History of Christian Thought*, I, Neve, pp. 50f, 57f). The *Marcionites* reacted against the legalism of the Ebionites. They repudiated all of the Old Testament, mutilated the gospel of Luke, and accepted only 10 of Paul's books, excluding the pastoral epistles and Hebrews. They held some Gnostic views of Christ. (*ibid*). The fact that Paul and Peter were in harmony (Acts 15) on doctrine and that Peter's dissimulation was the problem, not doctrinal differences, explodes the theory (Gal. 2: 11-14). Both regarded each other later as beloved brethren (I Cor. 9:5; II Pet. 3:15f). Mark and Silas served both, evidencing unity and fellowship (Col. 4:10; I Pet. 5:12, 13; Acts 15:40).

CHURCH ORGANIZATION AND THE LIBERAL RECONSTRUCTION

The only organization known to the early church was local, there being no hierarchy until the apostasy, no monarchial episcopate (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:17, 28; I Tim. 3; and Titus 1). Diocesan bishops gradually developed, vying with one another as "metropolitan bishops" at Jerusalem, Rome, Constantinople and Alexandria. The full-blown apostasy came about with the Imperial appointment of the Universal Bishop at Rome, when Phocas gave the title to Boniface III in 606 A. D. (*Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, I, John Lawrence von Mosheim, New Haven: A. H. Maltby, 1832, p. 513).

Let us emphasize this point: the church had already reached unity (orthodoxy) in the first century, since those delegated with authority from Christ to execute His authority were inspired of God (II Tim. 3:16f). The church was not an accidental happenstance, but was, as we have seen, according to prophecy, and according to "God's eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus the Lord" (Eph. 3:11f). The liberal view depicts orthodox religion in the days of Irenaeus (180 A. D.), but the facts do not sustain this. Their position is the result of their acceptance of the humanistic Hegelian dialectic, and rejection of the inspiration of the New Testament and rejection of anything supernatural. The church did not formulate the canon through development of the monarchial episcopate, but merely accepted what was already determined by the Holy Spirit and had been accepted by churches of Christ from the beginning, and circulated among the churches (Col.

4:16). There were no successors to the apostles. We do not prove our identity with the apostles by apostolic succession through a so-called unbroken chain, but by apostolic identity in teaching the same truths. There is no *clergy* with authority over the *laity*, and no authority of elders beyond the local congregation (Acts 20:28). The elders have no authority to bind other laws than the New Testament, and are bound only to preside over and execute the will of Christ by their encouragement and example (I Tim. 5:19f; I Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 20:28). Thus, orthodoxy was present in the first century because their teaching was from heaven and not from men (I Cor. 2:12-14; Gal. 1:11f).

In the New Testament, the *presbuteroi*, presbyters, or elders, were the same as the *episcopoi*, bishops, or overseers (Acts 20:17, 28), and are used interchangeably. Another word for the same office of men was *poimeen*, shepherds, or pastors (Eph. 4:11; I Pet. 5:1-4). *The Epistle of Clement* and the *Didache*, non-apostolic writings, also show an interchange of these terms (Scaff, *op. cit.*, I, p. 483). See also I Tim. 3; 5:17-19; Titus 1:5-7; Phil. 1:1.

Ignatius was the first to employ the term "catholic" and first to speak of one bishop as head of presbyters and deacons in one congregation. This was about 115 A. D. (Neve, I, *op. cit.*, p. 72). By 150 A. D., many bishops with presbyters beneath them as a secondary office had developed. Step by step this gradually led to bishops over a diocese, thus in the days of Irenaeus (180 A. D.), there developed a system known as the "monarchical episcopate," at first suggested by Ignatius, which culminated in one bishop having authority over several churches in a metropolitan area. At this time, there was no thought of a universal bishop. Their motives, however pure, were to lead to apostasy later known as Roman Catholicism. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (248-258), emphasized the bishop is the successor of the apostles, that they are the legitimate interpreters of the apostles' teaching, and that the college of bishops is the authority of the church. He did not favor a Roman hierarchy, but willingly recognized the preeminence of Rome. His motive of safeguarding the unity of the church led to the hierarchy of Rome (Neve, I, *op. cit.*, p. 76).

The Liberal conception of church organization holds that historic facts were early, but doctrine developed later. This fits Hegel's theory of progress of ideas to say that bishops of the monarchical episcopate were authoritative interpreters of the faith. "The history of Catholic Christianity during the first five centuries is the history of the progressive standardization of a diversity, which had its origin in the apostolic age" (B. H. Streeter, *The Primitive Church,* p. 50). They affirm that Irenaeus formed the canon of the New Testament, along with other bishops, in order to offset Marcion's heresy. It is true that "canons are formed in crises," but the canon was formed in the minds of early Christians long before Irenaeus, and the books of the New Testament were circulated among the churches. It was an *inspired revelation* (I Cor. 2:12f; II Tim. 3:16f), not a community development. To say, "the writings of the New Testament were a late product of the Christian movement" (*Abingdon Bible Commentary*, p. 946), is to reflect on the inspiration of those who were revealing the mind of Christ as they were guided by the Holy Spirit in giving us this "product" (John 16:13; Gal. 1:11f). The liberal idea leads them to say, "the authority resides less in the book itself than in the life and experiences and associated facts which existed prior to the New Testament, and of which the New Testament is both a product and a witness" (*Abingdon Bible Commentary*, p. 950). It is true that the authority lies in Jesus (Matt. 28:18), but it is equally true that He delegated authority to His apostles to reveal His will, and such will contains His authorized doctrine (John 14:26; 16:13), and the same will be the standard of judgment in the last day (John

12:48). The message of the New Testament was not a mere "accretion" of first century minds, but as Jesus said, "for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (Matt. 10:20). And as Paul the apostle said, "the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11f).

B. H. Streeter's "four document hypothesis" is the standard modern theory of their approach to the synoptic gospels, as described in *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*, pp. 867-73,

> This would provide for different treatments of Mark at the hands of Matthew and Luke, who probably used different copies of the Roman gospel. To Matthew the chief authority was Mark, but for Luke there existed a preferred source, namely, an earlier edition of his own gospel, itself based upon Q, and another document called "L", which contained matter now embodied in Luke as his "unique material." The pre-Lukan Gospel Streeter called Proto-Luke. It is not considered one of the fundamental (four) documents, but a stage half way between Q plus L and the canonical Luke. Matthew, on the other hand, prized Mark

> most of all, yet had access to a document called M (containing material now known as the "unique material" of Matthew) and to Q as well. Thus the four documentary hypotheses, in brief, contemplates the rise of Q first of all (about 50 A. D. at Antioch) as a collection of Jesus' words; of M, at Jerusalem, about 65 A. D.; which, with L (a creature of Caesarean environment about 60), and Mark (Rome, A. D. 60) completes the groundwork of the canonical synoptic structure.

The results of this kind of treatment of the gospels are barren, for the reduction of material from the gospel is such that they do not know what Jesus said, or did. Form Criticism is equally barren. It originated in Heidelberg, Germany with Martin Dibelius in 1919, and Rudolf Bultmann, of Marburg, 1921. Their fundamental assumptions were that material in folk literature assumes fixed "forms" with little change. They also held that forms are due to the situation in which the tradition is fixed, and the history of the tradition can be discovered from the form. Dibelius defined the setting of tradition as preaching centered in the *kerygma* (I Cor. 1:21, "the thing preached"). Bultmann found origin of forms in church controversies and need of instruction of new converts. There wasn't any agreement as to setting of forms except out of community life. The meaning of form is a "type" of paragraph. The forms in the tradition were: 1) Paradigm (narratives), 2) Miracle story (novelle-tale), 3) Paranaese (sayings), 4) Legend (stories), 5) Myths (action of divine person), and 6) Passion story. As to forms in the community, Dibelius finds some forms, including the passion story, most "sayings" and "miracles" as early authentic. Bultmann, more skeptical, says most material originated in the life of the community, and very little is authentic. One can easily see that this treatment of the gospels by such skeptics is indicative of a lack of faith in the scriptures as the inspired word of God.

Following are limitations of Form Criticism:

1. Classification should be according to form and nothing else.
2. Form-less groups should not be given historical value.
3. Form criticism has not made adequate use of the results of literary criticism.
4. In stressing the influence of the primitive community it is blind to the influence of Jesus as Rabbi and prophet. Likely he repeated in different forms.

5. It neglects far too much the presence of eye witnesses in the formative period.

6. It neglects evidence of the second century and later writers.

7. It has not clearly defined the extent of the formative period.

8. It has unjustifiably assumed that contexts and settings and chronological details are of no historical or biographical value.

9. It is not justified in assuming that analogy is a guide to the historical truth of the Legends and Myths.

10. In evaluating the vital factors it does not take account of all the varied interests of the early church.

11. It gives wide scope for subjective treatment, and is partial to it.

12. It overlooks the willingness of the primitive church to suffer and die for the faith.

13. By overemphasizing the *Parousia*, it has overlooked the man who lived a normal life, though they held the *Parousia* to be imminent, the second coming. (E. Basil Redlich, *Form Criticism*, pp. 77f).

EXISTENTIALISM

Other names for existentialism are: Crisis Theology, Dialectical Theology, and Neo-Orthodoxy. This brand of theology differs from "old-line" Liberalism in that they reject reason and empirical experience. It is characterized by "confrontation experiences" similar to the direct operation of the Holy Spirit claimed by conservative and Calvinistic Protestants a generation ago. The theory of existentialism holds that in a moment of crisis in your life, you confront God personally (this is the *existential* moment), and then come out of the experience with answers you did not have and a feeling of assurance and certainty. You do ***not*** use your ***reason***, nor experience anything through your *five senses* in this process. It is said you cannot *explain* this mystical revelation, but you *know* you have it. Thus, it is a revolt against ***reason.*** This school of thought accepts historical criticism, thus rejects anything supernatural. To them the virgin birth, the resurrection, the 40 day appearance, and the ascension are mythical. Even the historical Adam and Jesus were not historical characters, but were *Myth.* Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, in Europe, and Reinhold Niebuhr in the U. S., were all schooled as liberals. Along with the liberals, they believe science and higher criticism have forever smashed the plenary inspiration of the Bible. The starting point of Neo-Orthodoxy is not God, but man, and is blatant skepticism.

The basic foundations of Neo-Orthodoxy as given by Cornelius Van Til are: 1) Historical

Criticism, 2) Dialecticism, 3) *Urgeschichte,* or primal history, and 4) *Existenz*, or how revelation makes contact with man. (*The New Modernism*, pp. 1f).

1. Neo-Orthodoxy wholeheartedly accepts all that is offered by modern destructive criticism. It accepts the natural origin of man for it has exalted science above the Bible. If they think a passage contradicts science, they accept science and reject the Bible. To them, man is not so much a creature of God as he is a joint participator in the two worlds of abstract rationality and brute factuality.

2. Although Criticism preceded Dialecticism, Dialecticism replaced Criticism rapidly after it came in vogue. Hegel's dialectic theories, along with those of Kierkegaarde and Fichte, are behind the development of the dialecticism in theology. Rejecting in part Hegel's theory, Barth built for the most part upon Kierkegaarde's views. His commentary on Romans closely resembled Kierkegaarde's "project of thought."

> Barth argues that man's relationship to God must be indirect rather than direct; the relation of man to God must be dialectical rather than systematic . . . In its opposition to "system", therefore, *Romans*

> by Barth resembles *Fragments* by Kierkegaarde . . . Truth, he says, is inwardness; how then can we approach or possess it in any temporal sense and outward form? (Van Til, *ibid.*, p. 68).

Thus, Neo-Orthodoxy accepts brute fact and is irrational. But it "is rationalistic in its virtual ascription of legislative power to the human mind over the whole field of human possibility." (Van Til, *ibid.*, p. 64).

3. In their theory of primal history (*Urgeschichte*), Barth holds that if God is to appear in history to man, it must be in another sort of history, which he calls "primal history." This means that there can be no historical revelation, either in word or in scripture, or fact in Christ, which can be taken at face value. Barth believes that neither Adam nor Christ has an historical existence, but are simply mythical characters. It is this singular view of history that has brought neo-orthodoxy into its belief in the "Christ of Faith," in opposition to the "Jesus of History." They do not believe Jesus had anything to do with Christianity, but that Christianity evolved out of the early church as "community inspiration." At this point, Bultmann's Form Criticism fits into the picture.

4. *Existenz*, or the original thought of the individual in himself, called forth by life situations necessitating a decision, such as one's profession, marriage, etc., is the fourth foundation of neo-orthodoxy. This is purely a private, subjective experience in which God speaks to the individual in the moment of crisis, not through propositional and objective truth. This also means that "there is not public truth which can be declared in a propositional statement. Of course, our nation and our world are in great danger when men cannot agree on what is right and wrong." (J. D. Thomas, "History of Modernism, Existentialism," *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. CIII, No. 9, March 2, 1961, p. 134).

Barth's Commentary on Romans, *Der Roemerbrief*, 1919, has its roots in the philosophy of Soren Kierkegaarde, Danish philosopher (1813-55). Kierkegaarde is known as one of the founding fathers of neo-orthodoxy. He revolted against abstract thought in philosophy. He felt that Hegel's rationalism was too cold, and that there was more a need for decision than conclusion. But in reaching that decision he took a blind passionate leap in order to arrive at the ultimate reality. He felt reason was a handicap in the existential experience. The Bible was rejected, and instead of propositional truth, a miraculous "confrontation experience," in which man comes directly in contact with God, was substituted. In this way be believed God speaks the certain knowledge directly. He criticized the church of Denmark for its lack of passion, and felt it was not subjective enough. Although he may be commended for recognizing the limitations of reason, and for attacking the stagnation of the church in Denmark, he exceeded bounds of common sense in extreme denial of reason in religion. This "leap in the dark" misses the nearness to God one has when he reverences the Word, as revealed through His Son. Neo-Orthodoxy was prompted by the gloom of despondency after the first World War, causing them to revolt against reason and orthodox Christianity. Although it has the trappings of Christian orthodoxy, it ends with skepticism by starting with man and not God.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

"The Early Church, Liberal Reconstruction and Existentialism"

1. Whom do liberals say founded the church? Refute.

2. What is the liberal view of Christ? Refute.

3. To whom do liberals compare Paul and Peter?

4. What was the only organization in the early church?

5. Mosheim establishes what date and circumstance for the first pope?

6. When does the liberal view depict orthodoxy (unity)?

7. Why was orthodoxy present in the first century?

8. Show an interchangeable use in the New Testament of pastors, bishops, and elders.

9. Who (and when) first spoke of one bishop as head of presbyters and deacons in one congregation?

10. Who emphasized, and when, that the bishop is successor of the apostles and that the college of bishops is the authority of the church?

11. What does the view the New Testament is the "late product of the Christian movement" do?

12. Where does New Testament authority reside?

13. What is meant by "the New Testament is the accretion of first century minds?"

14. Refute this with Matt. 10:19f; Gal. 1:11.

15. What is the standard modern liberal approach to the synoptic gospels?

16. What are the results of this four document hypothesis?

17. Explain Form Criticism.

18. Give three limitations of Form Criticism by Redlich.

19. Give three other names for Existentialism.

20. What are its basic tenets and its four foundations?

21. Explain Barth's roots in Kierkegaarde and his "leap of faith."

Chapter Eight

THE WORLD'S GREATEST BOOK

The Bible is truly the most unique book in the world because it is the only book which comes from God. It contains all we know about heaven, hell, God, our souls, our origin, our purpose, our destiny in eternity. It is the book that God gave man as his manual. When we buy a car or washing machine, we are given a manual which describes how it is to be operated, for maximum efficiency. God wanted man to know "how to love life and see good days" (I Pet. 3:10-12), so He gave him a book of instructions, a "manual" to tell him how to live for happiness, now and eternally.

Assuming the earth is approximately 6,000 years old, the Bible covers a period of about 4,100 years, at least. This would be from the beginning to 96 A. D., when revelation ceased, as John laid down the pen of inspiration after writing *Revelation.* Its writers number about 40. These men wrote 66 books, from Moses, 1500 B. C. to John, 96 A. D. These men lived in different ages and in different parts of the world. There could have been no conspiracy, yet all their writings are harmonious. They were ordinary men, perhaps not many were regarded as men of high intellectual attainments. Some were fishermen, tax collectors, vinedressers, and other lowly occupations. But the power was God's, for He inspired them to write as prophets or apostles. The unifying "factor" in all of these writers is Jesus, for He is the central theme of the entire Bible. Without Him, there could not have been the marvelous unity portrayed by all writers of the greatest book.

IT IS CURRENTLY APPLICABLE

One of the features about the writings of ordinary men is the fact they become obsolete. Someone will write a fine textbook, but in a few years someone will write one that is an improvement, at which time the other is regarded as outmoded. The same is true with automobiles, and other products issued by men. This demonstrates our human frailty as opposed to God's divine power. The Bible is as current as today's newspaper, although it was written centuries ago. Man is still a sinner and in need of salvation through Christ, and hope and love. The only power to lift man up must come from above. Voltaire boasted that while it took 40 men 1600 years to write it up, he would tear it down in 40 years. But Voltaire has gone the way of all flesh, and the Bible continues as the best seller! "And so I thought, the anvil of God's word, for ages skeptics' blows have beat upon, yet though the noise of falling blows was heard, the anvil is unharmed, the hammers gone."

MANY GREAT MEN HAVE COMMENDED THE BIBLE

This fact alone would not prove the Bible to be from God, but it is additional evidence there must be something unique about it when so many great and good men commend it. Abraham Lincoln said, "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this book that you can upon reason and the balance by faith and you will live and die a better man." Daniel Webster read through the Bible annually. He said, "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible our country will go on prospering, but if we in our prosperity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury us and our glory in profound obscurity." Andrew Jackson said, "This book is the rock on which this republic stands." John Quincy Adams said, "The first and almost the only book deserving of universal distinction is the Bible. I speak as a man of the world and I say to you, search the scriptures." Charles A. Dana, great American journalist, said, "Of all books, the most indispensable and the most useful, the one whose knowledge is the most effective, is the Bible. There is no book like the Bible. In every controversy the Bible contains the right answer and pleads the right policy." Isaac Watts, great hymn writer, said, "Stars that their courses roll have much instruction given, but thy good word informs the soul how it may climb to heaven." If so many great men have sung its praises, and have indicated it is indispensable to man, surely it must be from God.

CONSIDER ITS GREAT INFLUENCE

1. **On human laws:** In its day, the Hebrew nation had a higher standard of morals than any nation among the Gentiles, because God had given it the Mosaic law, which is the foundation of our laws. Were it not for these laws, society would be unsafe, and there would not be such a thing as "civilization." The Mosaic law was given to man as he was, but Christianity to man as he should be. Even before the Mosaic law, there was a moral order in the universe given by God which was manifested at the general revelation at creation. Romans 1:18-32 speaks of this as God's making Himself known as to His "everlasting power and divinity," so that the Gentiles were "without excuse" who departed

into idolatry. God has ordained (Rom. 13) that the civil government bear the sword for the protection of those who are well-doers against evildoers. The Ten Commandments stand as criteria for law by which justice and order may be established. The Bible has influenced law and order.

2. **On man's duty to government:** Without obedience to the government, there could be no civil authorities who rule the people. God ordained both divine and civil government, and has said, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). Jesus taught that we must "render unto Caesar the things that are Ceasar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22:21).

3. **On human rights:** A great deal is being said in our world about human rights. The "inalienable rights" our Constitution guarantees us were inspired by the Bible. All free people of the world are so because of recognition that man is made in the image of God, and is a free moral agent, having an indisputable right to decide for himself in matters pertaining to human conscience. Freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and freedom from

fear come to man only so long as God's word is reverenced. A people void of these rights is the picture of a people without the influence of the Bible.

4. **On human morals:** Why is a murderer a criminal? Why is a man regarded as immoral who runs off with another's wife? Why is taking property of another regarded as stealing? Why is it wrong to have two or more wives? Why is the permanence of marriage and provision for the upbringing of children safeguarded? Why do Christian people love their brethren, their neighbors and even their enemies? Is it not because the Bible has had that influence? Wherever the Bible has gone, morals have been uplifted and society made better. Woman has been elevated to a much higher position as a result of the Bible.

In addition to these realms, the Bible has greatly influenced music, poetry, literature, painting, and education. No other book has had such a tremendous influence.

IMPARTIALITY OF THE BIBLE

God is no "respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). If the Bible had been written by men, most certainly politics, family interests and personal considerations would have entered the picture. It is characteristic of biographers to overlook the faults, at least minimize them, and speak in high praise of the virtues. The Bible lays bare the facts and lets the reader judge. It approves the good, denounces the bad and does not spare even good men like David and Abraham when sinful acts were committed in moments of weakness. And when even the dastardly crimes of adultery and murder are committed, involving Uriah the Hittite and his wife, Bath-sheba, the details are put forth as a true reporter would give them. Uninspired men may have glossed over Peter's denial of Christ, or his dissimulations, along with Barnabas (Gal. 2). Abraham's lie, Solomon's lust, and Mark's cowardice are equally treated, as well as the faith of these great characters.

This feature is a solid indication of the divinity of the Bible. In no other book can be seen the impersonal lack of favoritism, but an unswerving devotion to truth.

SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY

The Bible is a textbook on the science of correct living, not on physical science. However, when its writers speak of matters that interrelate science, it is trustworthy. Even before their times, men knew by inspiration some things not known by science of their day. The rotundity of the earth was recognized, although this was not to be discovered by physical scientists until generations later (Isa. 40:22; Prov. 8:27). How else could such writers use language which harmonizes with later discoveries of science, if they were not guided by the Holy Spirit? (II Pet. 1:21).

As Bernard Ramm says, it is perhaps not good to "go hunting through the Bible for so-called marvelous anticipations of modern science" (*The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, Paternoster Press: London, 1967, p. 89). He points out a number of instances where Harry Rimmer felt were indications of such anticipation, but which must strain the interpretation in order to accomplish the purpose. For example, Rimmer thinks Isa. 60:8 refers to aeroplanes, but the passage obviously refers to a boat with white sails coming into the harbor, giving the appearance of white doves coming into their nest (*ibid.*, p. 90).

When the Bible speaks geographically, such as Jerusalem being *up*, and going *down* from Jerusalem to Jericho, it is completely accurate. Ramm says,

> The truth about the geographical record can only be settled with the combination of geology and theology. If Genesis

> is completely silent about secondary causes, and if geology is ignorant about first causes, then it is only as we bring the first causes and secondary causes together that we will get the truth for the full understanding of the geologic record. The theologian knows that God is Creator, but that fact does not tell him the how and when. (*Ibid.*, p. 154).

Although Ramm may make some compromises with science which are unnecessary, it is true that there is a harmony between true science and true knowledge of the Bible. It is surely correct to say, "we may believe the Biblical records with full assurance of being in agreement with geological science" (*ibid.*, p. 169). The Bible account of the flood is in agreement with findings in the realm of geology.

ITS INDESTRUCTIBILITY

Many have been the efforts of men to destroy the Bible, but all have failed. Popes have had them burned. Atheists have used intellectual efforts to destroy the Bible by attempting to discredit it. Hugo McCord notes in ***From Heaven or From Men*** (Austin: Firm Foundation, 1970), pp. 26f:

Nero succeeded in killing Paul, but today Nero is dead, and his empire, but Paul's prison epistles are still living and active.

In 303 A. D. Diocletian ordered all copies of the sacred scriptures destroyed. So successful did he consider the work of his soldiers and inquisitors he had a medal engraved, "The Christian religion is destroyed and the worship of the gods restored." Then he had erected, over the ashes of burned Bibles, a monument which bore the inscription – EXTINCTO NOMINE CHRISTIANORUM – "Extinct is the name of Christians." Twenty years later another Roman Emperor, Constantine, was seeking to put the New Testament in all the churches in the empire. – B. C. Goodpasture.

Besides physical violence against the Scriptures, legion have been the attempts by unbelievers to discredit them. Egotistic Voltaire, who died in 1778, predicted that, after his attacks on the Bible, in one hundred years it would be extinct. "It took twelve men to start Christianity. One will destroy it," he bragged. However, soon after his death, the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded and it employed

Voltaire's writing room as a storeroom for Bibles. "The very presses that printed Voltaire's infidel literature have since been used to print the Bible."

Thomas Paine, who died in 1809, was so proud of his Biblical attack through his infamous book, *Age of Reason* that he boasted, "Fifty years hence the Bible will be obsolete and forgotten." But the same thing has happened to his printing press as happened to Voltaire's.

Bob Ingersoll once held a Bible high in his hand and exclaimed, "In fifteen years I will have this book in the morgue." In fifteen years Ingersoll was in the morgue, and the very desk on which he had written defamations of the Scriptures was later used by Robert Garry to write Bible lessons.

Someone has written:

Despised and torn in pieces, by infidels decried,
The thunderbolts of hatred, the haughty cynic's pride –
All these have railed against it in this and other lands
Yet dynasties have fallen, and still the Bible stands!

An unknown author has said: "This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character.

Here, heaven is opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our God its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at the judgment, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents."

"Forever, O, Lord thy word is settled in heaven" (Psa. 119:89).

The late Lew Wallace, Governor of New Mexico during the days of Billy the Kid, was an atheist during his young adulthood. As he advanced in years, he decided to take a Bible, travel to the "Holy Land," and somehow prove not only to himself, but to the world as well – that the Bible was a hoax; that there was no God, and that Jesus had been a fraud.

But instead, as he traveled and read, he allowed certain truths of the Bible to reach his consciousness, and he returned to the United States believing in God and in Jesus the Christ as the promised Savior of mankind. He returned to New Mexico and, in the shade of a tree beside the only hotel in White Oaks, penned "Ben Hur," a tale of the Christ familiar to all. Many people have opened that same Bible with dreams and plans; they have tried to expose it as a fraudulent production; they have tried to convince the world of these false ideas. But the Bible has always stood the test, and with its penetrating analysis of the human heart, has conquered instead the ones who have tried to dispel its light.

REVIEW QUESTIONS
"The World's Greatest Book"

1. How may the Bible and man be compared to a car or machine?

2. How may the unifying factor of the Bible be explained?

3. What is characteristic of the writings of ordinary men?

4. How does the Bible differ (and why) from men's writings?

5. What evidence comes from comments about the Bible from great men (give two quotes).

6. What of the influence of the Bible on human laws?

7. What influence has it had on citizens' obedience to government?

8. Regarding human rights, what influence has the Bible had in the U. S.?

9. What influence on morals has the Bible had?

10. Why is its impartiality on evidence of the Bible's divinity?

11. Give two indications of the scientific accuracy of the Bible.

12. When is the harmony seen between

science and Scripture?

13. How may the indestructibility of the Bible be seen when compared to statements of men like Voltaire, Diocletian, Ingersoll and Paine?

14. Relate the change in Lew Wallace and its result.

Chapter Nine

INSPIRATION
Part One

The subject of inspiration is a very important one. If the Bible is not inspired, we have no definite knowledge as to the origin of the earth, nor of the origin, purpose and destiny of man. Furthermore, we cannot be sure it will not be superceded by some later volume. And perhaps more important, we cannot rely upon its exceeding precious promises. We want to believe we have an infallible standard. If not, every man is his own standard, and this would bring great trouble to the world, if there were no objective standard of right and wrong. This stimulates us to find answers, and to prove inspiration.

The term "God-inspired" (*theopneustos*) is used in adjective form pertaining to the books of the Old Testament (II Tim. 3:16). God was the active agent in the origin of the scriptures. He breathed into, inspired, certain chosen men, enabling them to communicate His will to the people. Just as the breath of man is in his words, so also the breath of God is in His words, by the Holy Spirit. "But men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21). Thus, inspiration is "cooperation of man with God in revelation to the extent that the revelation is infallible."

THE BIBLE CLAIMS INSPIRATION FOR ITSELF THROUGHOUT

1. **The Old Testament:** At the giving of the Ten Commandments, God appeared to Moses, saying, "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage . . . thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven" (Exodus 20:2, 22). After Moses wrote the law and delivered it to the priests and elders of Israel, he commanded that it be read before all Israel every seven years "that they may learn, and fear Jehovah your God, and observe to do all the words of this law; and that their children who have not known may hear, and learn to fear Jehovah, your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it" (Deut. 31:9-13). Not only did Moses claim inspiration, but David as well: "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and his word was upon my tongue" (II Sam. 23:2).

New Testament references to the Old Testament confirm the divinity of the Old

Testament Scriptures. "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son" (Heb. 1:1f). After Peter heard God's voice testifying to Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, he said, "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts; knowing this, first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:17-21). Regarding the salvation through Christ, Peter said, "the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them" (I Pet. 1:10f). Furthermore, New Testament writers called the Old Testament the Scriptures, "the holy scriptures," and the "sacred writings," even the "oracles of God" (Matt. 21:42; Luke 24:27; Rom. 1:2; II Tim. 3:15; Rom. 3:2). These terms witness to the inspiration of the scriptures of the Old Testament. The Lord endorsed the Old Testament, and to thus disclaim its inspiration is to belittle Jesus (Matt. 15:4-9). Jesus believed in the actuality of the characters of Jonah and Solomon, and their writings (Matt. 12:39-42). He referred to Abraham in the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), and He referred to that which had been written in "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms concerning me" as having been fulfilled (Luke 24:44). In His hour of temptation, He appealed to the Old Testament (Deut. 8:3; 6:16, 13; Psa. 91:11f) as "it is written," scriptures to be taken seriously from the Father. The Lord did not belittle the Old Testament law but said He came to fulfill it, not to destroy it (Matt. 5:17). He honored it and fulfilled it. The Old and New Testaments stand or fall together. Both are the word of the Lord (Matt. 4:1-11).

2. **The New Testament:** Any theory of inspiration which fails to take into consideration the facts presented in the New Testament for itself would be in vain. There are three catagories of passages in the New Testament which present the proper view: 1) Those passages in which *Jesus promised inspiration to the apostles.* "But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you

in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (Matt. 10:19f). Here is a clear promise prohibiting their anxiety due to divine aid which would enable them to know not only *what* but *how* they were to speak. This divine aid would be administered by the medium of the Holy Spirit. The figure of elipsis, meaning it is not *only* you that speak, *but also* the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you, – this idiomatic expression being well known to the Jews, placed the absolute negative for the relative. This gives us God's definition of inspiration. He wanted the apostles to speak, but being guided by the Holy Spirit which was in them, so that the chief speaking would be that from heaven. Promises recorded by other writers are in Luke 21:12-15; John 14:15-17, 26; 16:12f; and Acts 1:5, 8. These passages make it clear that the Holy Spirit was speaking in the apostles to such an extent that it recalled memories of what Jesus had spoken while on the earth in their presence, and working wonders in their presence, all of which were given them to remember as they spoke and wrote of them. Not only this, but in truths which were as yet untaught, they were guided into revelation of these which would be the same as if Jesus had spoken them, for the Spirit of the Father was in them to make such truth known. 2) The *fulfillment of these promises.* The book of Acts shows the fulfillment of the promises of Jesus to the apostles. Chapter two shows their speaking without premeditation, the words and thoughts being given to them, and even leading them into truths hitherto unknown, such as the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy and that of David. This was called a baptism of the Holy Spirit, conveying the idea that they were "immersed," or completely under the control, in the Holy Spirit. This power enabled them to speak in languages they had never learned. Their decision not to require circumcision of the Gentiles was a decision of the Holy Spirit, as recorded in Acts 15:27f. The miracles performed by the apostles, both of healing and administering punishment, show the divine power of the Spirit in them (Acts 3:1-11; 5:1-11). Also, their power to impart spiritual gifts to others is another indication of the fulfillment of these promises of Jesus (Acts 8:14-17). This proved that Jesus' statement "he abideth with you" was fulfilled, as the continuing power of the Spirit was exercised by them. 3) *The fulfillment as stated in the epistles.* I Cor. 2:1-4, 10-13, 16; Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:1-5; I Tim. 4:1; Gal. 2:2; II Cor. 12:7; I Cor. 14:37. These verses show that the power of the Holy Spirit was in the apostles to reveal to them the mind of Christ, and that the words spoken and written were thus the commandments of the Lord. See also I Pet. 1:12; I John 5:7f.

In the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus quoted Abraham saying to the rich man, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:29-31). If the word spoken through Moses and the prophets was God's inspired media to communicate His will to the Jewish people, how much more important for us to understand that the word of Christ and the apostles is His power unto salvation today? (Rom. 1:16). God has put life-giving power, faith-producing power, in the word (John 6:63; Rom. 10:17). There is power in the written word to convince the honest inquirer "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:30f). There is also power to nurture the new-born baby in Christ in "the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

INTERNAL EVIDENCES

It has been said that to find out if a nugget is gold, examine the nugget itself. This is surely true in regard to the Bible. Consider the following:

1. **Signs given to the prophets:** With "the rod of God in his hand" (Exodus 4:20), Moses was made "as God to Pharaoh" (Exodus 7:1), and worked many wonders in Egypt and the wilderness to lead God's people out of bondage and through the wilderness. Most of the time the people could only tell by the moral earnestness, sincerity, morally upright life and integrity of the prophet, the reasonableness of the message itself, and its appeal to their consciences, that it was God speaking. Blinded by the world, many saw no sense in their message. With impure motives false prophets often said God had spoken to them, but God's test for the people to discern the true from the false was in the event it did not come to pass "that is the thing which Jehovah hath not spoken" (Deut. 18:18-22). If God showed no sign to a prophet who had spoken presumptuously, he was to be regarded as a false prophet, or if his word did not come to pass. Elijah's word was confirmed on Mt. Carmel by God's signs to him (I Kings 18).

2. **The power of prophecy:** By late dating after the events, humanistic critics have turned this argument based on prophecy into a

liability for some, all because they deny the obvious supernatural. But when fairly considered, along with other proofs, prophecy adds cumulative weight to the internal evidence of inspiration. Consider the many prophecies about Christ which were fulfilled, as "a lamb that is led to the slaughter," etc., which Isa. 53:7, 8 prophesies, and Philip the evangelist shows the Ethiopian eunuch to be a reference to the death of Christ (Acts 8:32f). Frederick the Great is said to have asked his chaplain to prove inspiration, whereupon the chaplain said, "The Jews." Truly, Deut. 28:37 has been fulfilled throughout the generations of the Jews, "a hiss and a byword." Joshua's prophecy of the curse upon the one rebuilding Jericho "with the loss of his firstborn . . . and with the loss of his youngest son" (Josh. 6:26). This came to pass exactly in I Kings 16:34, and the writer of I Kings attributes it to fulfillment "according to the word of Jehovah, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun."

3. **Signs and wonders of Jesus and the apostles.** In Heb. 2:3f, the writer said, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers,

and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." For a time the inspired word was in the inspired men, and their word was confirmed by signs and wonders. Later, they wrote about the miracles of Jesus and of his marvelous teachings, being led by the Holy Spirit not only to write and recall events and teachings, but also to heal and punish as God saw fit for the confirmation of their word. They bore the "signs of an apostle" (II Cor. 12:12).

4. **The marvelous unity** from Genesis to Revelation (see Chapter 8).

5. **Scientific foreknowledge.** (See Chapter 8).

6. **The loftiness of religious and moral ideals set forth:** It is impossible for such lofty ideals to come from deceivers, or those who were deceived. No other religion asks so much of men, nor promises such abundant life both here and hereafter. The most progressive parts of the earth are where the Word of God has gone and spread its enlightenment and freedom. There is a marked contrast between lands where men are free to study the Bible, and those where religious tyrants have prevented or discouraged its study.

REVIEW QUESTIONS
"Inspiration"
Part One

1. If the Bible is not inspired, what are the consequences?

2. What is the meaning of *theopneustos*? (II Tim. 3:16).

3. Define inspiration.

4. Give two (2) Old Testament passages showing its claim for inspiration (Exodus 20:2, 22; II Sam. 23:2).

5. Give two (2) New Testament passages affirming inspiration of the Old Testament (Heb. 1:1, 2; II Pet. 1:17-21).

6. What did Peter say Old Testament prophets knew beforehand? (I Pet. 1:10-12).

7. What are some divine names given the Old Testament by New Testament writers? (Matt. 21:42; Luke 24:27; Rom. 1:2; II Tim. 3:15; Rom. 3:2).

8. How did Jesus regard the Old Testament? (Matt. 12:39-42; 15:4-9; Luke 16:19-31; 24:44).

9. Did Jesus come to destroy the Old Testament? (Matt. 5:17).

10. To what did he appeal in time of temptation? (Matt. 4:1-11; Deut. 8:3; 6:6, 13; Psa. 91:11f).

11. What promise did Jesus give the apostles? (Matt. 10:19f; Luke 21:12-15; Acts 1:5-8; John 16:12f; 14:15-17, 26, 27).

12. When did these promises begin to be fulfilled? (Acts 2:1ff; 10:1ff; 15: 27f).

13. What confirmation was given their message? (Acts 3:1-11; 5:1-11; 13: 9ff; Heb. 2:1-4).

14. What power to apostles regarding miracles to others was given? (Acts 8:14-17).

15. How was the promise to them fulfilled

in the Epistles? (I Cor. 2:1-4, 10-13; Gal. 1:11f; Eph. 3:1-5; II Cor. 12:7; I Tim. 4:1; I Cor. 14:37; I Pet. 1:12; I John 5:7f).

16. What power has God put in their word? (John 6:63; Rom. 1:16; 10:17).

17. What convincing power is in the New Testament? (John 20:30, 31).

18. What other power is in the New Testament? (Acts 20:32).

19. Name six (6) internal evidences of its inspiration.

20. What reply was given Frederick the Great as proof of the Bible's inspiration? (Deut. 28:37).

21. What was the test God gave His people to discern a true and false prophet? (Deut. 18:18-22).

22. What was the fulfillment of Joshua 6:26? (I Kings 16:34).

23. Who bore the “signs” of an apostle and where? (II Cor. 12:12).

24. Describe the unity of the scriptures as evidence.

25. How do lofty Biblical ideals lend proof?

Chapter Ten

INSPIRATION
Part Two

In this chapter we shall deal with the subject of inspiration from the view of (1) explanations which clarify, (2) objections, (3) erroneous theories, and (4) verbal inspiration.

EXPLANATIONS WHICH CLARIFY

1. **Varying styles of writers:** Just as the divinity of the Son of God – Son of Man is past human comprehension, so with the Bible as a product of the Spirit of God-Inspired Man. Truth cannot be bound in creeds. Many well-meaning men were cut off from Councils of men because they would not be bound by man-made creeds, and were thus regarded as heretics. We cannot formulate a creed in regard to inspiration to encase the true word of God. Writers of the Bible have varying styles, and being Jews, employ the use of Hebrew idioms. This merely indicates that inspiration did not dispense with any use of knowledge or talents gained by the writers. The Holy Spirit left each man to his own style and

vocabulary, so giving variety to the Bible and producing good.

2. **Human feelings expressed:** Obviously, the Holy Spirit left each writer free to express his thoughts from the overflow of his own emotions, or intense feelings at the moment of writing. This merely shows the Bible to be a warm and tender book, rather than cold and formalistic. The Spirit's lack of restraint is obviously to show the readers how writers felt under the circumstances surrounding them. Especially is this so of Paul.

3. **Old Testament Quotations:** New Testament writers quoted mostly from the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament). However, at times they differed slightly from the Septuagint, and in a few instances quoted from the Hebrew, as indicated by the example of Eph. 4:8. In this instance, not only did Paul quote from the Hebrew, but made a slight modification of words, but without change of substantial meaning. The Hebrew rendering: "Thou hast ascended up on high, thou hast led thy captivity captive, and received gifts in the manner of men." But in Eph. 4:8, Paul says, "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." McGarvey

explains this:

> In this instance the obscure expression of the Hebrew, 'received gifts among men,' is rendered by the Greek translators, 'received gifts in the manner of men,' and by Paul, 'gave gifts unto men.' This is a change of the Old Testament text in thought; but it only carries the original thought to its ultimate aim; for the gifts which Christ received were not for himself, but for men, and this is brought out in the words, 'gave gifts unto me.' . . . In this instance, if they were guided by the Holy Spirit at all, we must understand that he guided them to make variations on his own words and thoughts previously expressed through the prophets. Or, if we suppose that in these matters he left their minds free from guidance, we must conclude that he did so because the writers without special guidance wrote that which he approved. In other words, if the apostles have not falsified the fact of their inspiration, their quotations are just what the Holy Spirit would have them to be. (J. W. McGarvey, *Evidences of Christianity*, Cincinnati: Standard Pub. Co., 1886, p. 193).

4. **Do the facts differ from the Old Testament?** In Acts 7:16, Abraham is substituted for Jacob (Gen. 33:19), and in Mark 2:26: Abiather is substituted for Abimelech (I Sam. 21:1-6) as high priest when David ate the shew bread. These are obviously copyists' errors, when we consider the high probability of such clerical errors entering into the texts. Not unless it could be certain that the inspired men made the mistake could this have bearing on inspiration. Even then, there may be some explanation for the use of another name, as in the case of Jeremiah (Matt. 27:9f) instead of Zechariah (Zech. 11:12). In the manuscript roll of the prophets, Jeremiah's name was listed first, and Matthew could very easily have given the general instead of the specific name.

5. **Predictions having no apparent relevance to events fulfilled:** In John 19:36, we learn that they "brake not his legs, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'a bone of him shall not be broken'." Neither Jew nor Christian could have understood the reason for Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12, prohibiting breaking the bone of the paschal lamb, unless the inspiration of John had pointed out this connection, and Paul had told us Jesus was anti-type of the paschal lamb (I Cor. 5:7). The same is true of

"They shall look on him whom they pierced" (John 19:37), a quotation from Zech. 12:10, obscure in its context in the Old Testament which speaks of Judah and Jerusalem, but explained by John as referring to piercing of the side of Christ. Obviously, the inspiration of New Testament writers shed light which even Old Testament prophets did not understand, thus guiding the apostles into truth previously hidden, now being made known by apostles and prophets.

6. **Ignorance of apostles:** On some points and on certain occasions the apostles were ignorant of facts later revealed to them. Peter on Pentecost (Acts 2:39) did not know what was revealed to him at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:34), thus inspiration was obviously gradual on some points, not immediate, but as God saw fit to reveal it. Thus, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Peter uttered words which were in the mind of the Spirit, but which Peter did not have a full grasp concerning until later. This is parallel to the predictions of older prophets who did not think of that which was in the mind of the Spirit regarding the time and manner of Christ's coming to the world (I Pet. 1:10f).

7. **Imperfect characters of inspired men:** Inspiration does not vouch for the mistakes of

inspired men in their conduct, but recognizes the truth that "if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:8, 10). Peter's character was defective when he dissimulated (Gal. 2), but inspiration obviously did not automatically purify their nature to free them from sin, but did enlighten their minds to tell the truth. God did select good men as his subjects of inspiration, but to be inspired and to be good are distinct and different concepts.

OBJECTIONS TO INSPIRATION

1. **Was Paul inspired in I Cor. 7?** After Paul discusses separation of husband and wife "by consent for a season," he says, "But this I say by way of concession, not of commandment" (I Cor. 7:5, 6). This has been interpreted to mean that Paul wasn't commanded to say this, therefore he said it on his own authority. "But the context clearly shows that the distinction is between his permitting and his commanding the *husband* and the *wife*." (McGarvey, *op. cit.*, p. 202). It has no connection to our inquiry on the matter of inspiration. Then in verses 10 and 12, "But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord," and "But to the rest say I, not the Lord." Does he give one

commandment here by the Lord's authority, but another without? No, because the real distinction is between what the Lord actually taught while on the earth, and what Paul teaches in his apostolic office. This is seen to be the real distinction in the fact that one commandment is found in the sermon on the mount, while the other is not in the Lord's teaching. Also, Paul says after the other command not in the Lord's teaching, "And so I ordain in all the churches" (verse 17). Also, Paul gives his judgment in verses 25 and 26 regarding virgins marrying. After giving his human judgment, he ends with "I think that I also have the Spirit of God" (verse 40). The second *I* for emphasis, along with the expression ***also*** indicates he also had the Spirit as well as somebody else in the Corinthian church. It is likely someone had arrayed his authority against Paul's, for others had spiritual gifts, and Paul was silencing their arguments, pleading that his own teaching should not be ignored. Further, if Paul thought that he had the Spirit of God, we have no right to question it, for he had better reasons to so think than we. The passage does not mean he had doubt about his inspiration, but that he was inspired whether others were or not.

2. Some have contended that Paul's

statement, "besides, I know not whether I baptized any other" (I Cor. 1:16), is proof he was not inspired. They hold that this constitutes faulty memory, while Jesus promised to bring all things to their remembrance. However, Jesus did not promise to bring *all things* to their memory, but "all that I said unto you" (John 14:26). It is a proper view of inspiration to understand that Jesus brought anything to their memory, whether he had spoken it or not, if necessary to the apostolic revelation. But the matters which Paul could not recollect had no bearing on the things to be revealed, therefore it was not necessary for the Holy Spirit to bring such to his remembrance.

3. It is charged by unbelievers that the Bible is not inspired because it contains contradictions in the realms of science and history. Although they make this charge with boldness, it has not been proved true that contradictions exist. As science and history make more progress, it is seen that really up-to-date science is in accord with the Biblical facts. As we have seen, the Bible does not claim to be a textbook on science or history, but the same author of the scientific world, is also the author of the Bible. We believe a fair and impartial examination of both will reveal true harmony.

4. Some have asked, "Why give an infallible text only to be corrupted by transcribers?" We have seen that manuscript evidence for the Bible shows we have nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of the text "precisely as it was given to us, and nearly all of the other one thousandths part has been settled with almost absolute certainty. The objection, then, is fallacious, in that it aims to spread over the whole book the shadow of doubt which really affects only a very small part, and a part which is definitely known, and which is so marked in our latest English version as to point out to the most unlearned reader." (J. W. McGarvey, *Evidences of Christianity*, p. 209f).

> It might as well be asked, why keep in our clerk's offices perfect standards of weights and measures, seeing that many of those in use agree but imperfectly with them? The answer is, we want the perfect standard in order that we may regulate the instruments in use, and thus keep them as nearly perfect as possible. In like manner we need an infallible text of the Scripture to begin with, in order that we may ever correct our copies by it and keep them as nearly like it as possible; and the fact that the church has succeeded in keeping her books precisely like the original text in

> almost every word through eighteen centuries is one of the marvels of that divine providence which watches over all things good and true. (*ibid.,* p. 210).

5. Montgomery points out an argument made by recent critics which they think is unanswerable, that an infallible text which must depend on a fallible science of textual study must not be infallible. He answers the argument:

> Evidence for Biblical inerrancy (whether viewed from the angle of Textual Criticism or from the more general perspective of Apologetics) is never itself inerrant, but this by no means makes the inerrancy claim irrational. Warfield is perfectly willing to admit that his case is a probability case (Warfield argument for inerrancy of the scriptures, BN), yet he affirms the inerrancy of the Bible in *all* matters to which it refers – not just to those "germane to salvation" (whatever they may be!). Why? Because, as he correctly observes, the evidence that Christ (God Himself incarnate) held to exactly this inerrancy view of Scripture "is about as great in amount and weight as 'probable' evidence can be made" and

> thus warrants conviction on our part.
>
> The weight of Christ's testimony to Scripture is so much more powerful than any alleged contradiction or error in the text or any combination of them, that the latter must be adjusted to the former, not the reverse. (John Warwick Montgomery, *God's Inerrant Word*, Minn.: Bethany Fellowship, 1974, p. 37f).

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

Several theories have been proposed, which are in conflict with the Biblical teaching that the scriptures are verbally inspired in their fullness (plenary).

1. **Mechanical Theory:** This theory holds that not only the sense but every word, phrase and expression, as well as their arrangement, has been dictated to the writers by the Spirit of God. It fails to take into account the human feelings of the writers and the fact that the Spirit did not have to recall to their memory anything but that which they did not already remember. It also fails to consider that in guiding them into all truth it was not necessary to guide them into truth they already possessed. Ancient writers, such as Justin Martyr,

compared inspired writers to instruments of music, and that the Spirit "used them as its instruments, as a flute player might play a flute." Whether or not they intended this illustration to represent the whole of the Spirit's actions or a single feature, the illustration is not adequate. A better illustration would be that of driving a car, in which the driver guides the steering apparatus either right or left, as needed, stepping on the accelerator, or releasing it and applying the brakes when a slow speed or stop became necessary. A cruise control would allow the car to maintain speed of its own accord, yet the driver's hand is at the controls. Yet, even this illustration is not entirely adequate, since the car could not leap a cataract, or fly in the air, whereas the Spirit enabled the scripture writers to do things of a comparable nature.

2. **Ordinary inspiration:** This theory holds that the men were inspired like great uninspired writers (Shakespeare, Wordsworth, etc.) were inspired. In this manner, there would be no supernatural aid for the writers. Not only is the theory rationalistic, but it contradicts the claims made by the inspired writers, and denies the supernatural work of the Spirit.

3. **Degrees of inspiration:** Some have

divided inspired writers into classes with different degrees of inspiration. However, inspiration is a fact, not a quality which admits to degrees. The active force exerted by the Spirit may have different degrees, but the fact cannot. The air may have rapid or slow movement, but the fact that it moves does not vary. No doubt the intensity of the Spirit was greater when men spoke in tongues than when they merely recalled incidents in their own experience, but the inspiration was one and the same fact throughout.

4. **Essential theory:** Some have held that in matters essential to doctrine, morals and faith, the writers were inspired, but left to their own in matters such as science and history, at which points they were liable to err. However, a large part of the writings of the apostles consists of matters in this latter realm and would thus be excluded from inspiration, and yet this is also what Jesus promised to bring to their remembrance. If they were liable to error in matters of ordinary knowledge, in matters wherein we have means of testing them, it would tend to discredit them in the matters pertaining to salvation. Mistakes have not been proved in the realms which men have contended pertaining to science and history, but their credibility is seen upon investigation to have been written by men guided

by powers supernatural.

REVIEW QUESTIONS
"Inspiration"
Part Two

1. From what four views is inspiration considered in this lesson?

2. With what can the Spirit of God in the inspired man be compared?

3. How can one square inspiration with the varying styles of the writers?

4. How can one square inspiration with human emotions expressed by writers?

5. How may Paul's modification in Eph. 4:8 of the LXX on Psa. 68:18 be explained?

6. If not a copyist's error, how may an apparent (alleged) scribal error be explained in Matt. 27:9f and Zech. 11:12?

7. How does John 19:36 explain Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12?

8. How does John 19:37 explain Zech. 12:10?

9. Guided by the Spirit into all truth aided apostles thus to shed light on what?

10. Were apostles ever inspired to say what was not understood by them at the time? Give an instance and parallel it with one of Old Testament prophets.

11. Explain how inspiration does not vouch for mistaken conduct of inspired men.

12. Answer the objection to inspiration based on I Cor. 7:5, 6, 10, 12.

13. Was Paul's judgment in I Cor. 7:25, 26, uninspired? (See also vs. 40).

14. Answer the objection to inspiration based on I Cor. 1:16.

15. Answer the charge that there are contradictions in the realms of science and history in Biblical teaching.

16. Answer the objection based on textual variations (criticism).

17. What major fact warrants our conviction the scriptures are inerrant?

18. What is the weakness of the mechanical theory?

19. What is the error of the theory of "ordinary" inspiration?

20. May we divide Bible writers into classes, each having different degrees of inspiration? Why?

21. What weakness do you see in the "essential" theory? (Sometimes called "partial").

22. What kind of inspiration more fully meets the Biblical view?

Chapter Eleven

FORMATION OF THE CANON

The word "canon" means many things to many people. In our context, Biblically, it refers to "the collection or list of books which are received as genuine and inspired Holy Scriptures" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). The importance of this subject may be readily seen. If the books we know in our Old and New Testaments are not genuinely inspired, and if there is no way we can determine which books are, or are not, inspired, Christianity suffers great loss. Some have falsely claimed to be responsible for giving us the Bible, that is, their church councils have decreed such books to be canonical. Others have assumed there is a list written by the apostles to be found somewhere, but there is no such list.

> The canonicity of a particular book or writing is dependent upon its being considered as inspired, and expressly given by God for the guidance of men. Some writings, such as the Ten Commandments, or even the entire Law of Moses, were considered as inspired and canonical long

> before other Scriptures were written. We should, therefore, recognize that canonical Scripture was in existence long before the entire canon was completed. Actually, the canon of each Testament grew silently and imperceptibly until it reached completeness. *Acceptance* by God's people was a dominant part in the canonization process, yet we must recognize the fact that never did a council or group of men *make* a book canonical. They only ratified in each case certain books that had already gained their place. (*Our Bible*, edited by Frank Pack, Abilene Christian College, 1953, p. 41).

HOW CANONIZATION OCCURRED

As the Holy Spirit gradually revealed the will of God to men, the churches began to circulate the inspired books. With the sanction of Christ and the apostles, the Old Testament had descended to the church from the Jews (Rom. 3:1f). Josephus, famous Jewish historian, stated that the Jews accepted only 22 books regarded as divine (our 39 books), and that the time of writing was from Moses to Artaxerxes (1500 B. C. to 424 B. C). Though he sometimes is in error, he was likely voicing sentiment commonly accepted by the Jews of his day. He did not accept the Apocrypha (books of doubtful origin later accepted as canonical by some). Other witnesses to our 39 books of the Old Testament are the Jewish Old Testament, and Philo, (20 B. C. to 50 A. D.) an Alexandrian Jew who quoted many times but never the apocryphal ones. There is "much evidence to indicate that its canon was complete and accepted by about 400 B. C., the close of its period of history" (*ibid.*, p. 47). Further, the New Testament quotes every book in the Old Testament except Ecclesiastes, Esther and Song of Solomon, quoting from none of the apocryphal books. This is evidence of sufficient nature to merit confidence in the 39 recognized books of our Old Testament.

The New Testament books were circulated among the churches (Col. 4:16; Rev. 1:11). Among the first traces of formulation of a canon among the churches is found in II Pet. 3:15, "where a collection of Paul's epistles is presumed to exist, and is placed by the side of 'the other scriptures'." (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, p. 517). Jude 17f indicates a list of books written by the apostles.

Canonization, therefore, grew because the early Christians had to select what was to be read and accepted as authoritative words of God. It was theirs so to preserve the "faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). They selected them because they were inspired by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:12f; II Tim. 3:16f), and they knew them to be so because of the "signs and wonders confirming them" (Heb. 2:1-4; John 20:30f). The claim of verbal inspiration, and thus inerrancy of the scriptures, was to be very important.

TESTS OF CANONICITY

In accepting books as canonical, the book had to pass certain tests:

1. Did it pass the test of *authority*? Did the book claim inspiration? True, other books may have made such a claim, but still this fact was important.

2. Did it meet the test of *prophecy*? Was it written by the one who made the claim to be speaking as a messenger of the Holy Spirit? Did it have the ring of an inspired writer?

3. Did it meet the test of *authenticity*? Did it tell the truth on everything?

4. Did it meet the *dynamic* test? Was it able to change the quality of life of the people

with whom it came in contact?

5. Did it meet the test of *reception*? Did the first century Christians receive it as inspired? How soon was it recognized as canonical?

EVENTS AFFECTING FIRM RECOGNITION OF CANONICAL BOOKS

Not that these events were responsible for the canon of scriptures, for as we have seen, the books were canonical because inspired by the Holy Spirit, and so recognized by the early Christians, circulating among them as their rule of faith and practice. However, these events heightened the importance among Christians of recognition of the proper books.

1. **Heresy.** A distinction had to be made between the true and the false.

The heretical canon of the Gnostic Marcion, of the middle of the second century, consisting of a mutilated Gospel of Luke and ten of Paul's epistles, certainly implies the existence of an orthodox canon at that time, as heresy always presupposes truth, of which it is a caricature. (*op. cit.,* Schaff, p. 517).

2. **Problems of Second Century Church:**

As the problems pertaining to marriage, morality in general, and doctrinal issues arose they had to be met with an authoritative norm, a standard they could rely on to solve the difficulties.

3. **Spread of the church to Europe:** As the church spread, those who were taking the gospel to foreign borders had to know which books to take, and encourage others to accept. In this case, the church was not making the decision, the Holy Spirit had made that, thus the authority was already in existence; the church, recognizing this, took the necessary ones.

4. **Translations to other languages:** As Jerome (385 A. D.) was commissioned by Damasus I, a Roman bishop, to translate the Scriptures into Latin (the Vulgate) he had to know which books were to be translated. It is significant he did not translate apocryphal books of the Old Testament, for he did not recognize them as canonical. Nor did he translate uninspired books and place them in the canon of the New Testament. They were the 39 books of the Old and the 27 of the New as we know them today.

5. **Persecutions** led to firm recognition of the canonicity of sacred scripture. When one

must face danger and death for his faith, he will be certain those books are worth dying for. Other books may be worth nothing to the Christian, and he cares not whether they are burned, but if he is asked to renounce his faith in Christ and burn his Bible, he would give up his life rather than the Bible. This is being "faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

In this connection, the church fathers, such as Clement, Tertullian and Justin Martyr, quoted from the New Testament and recognized them as inspired scripture. Tertullian spoke as if he had seen the originals of the New Testament books, or knew where they could be seen (*Against Marcion*). This indicates recognition of the canon by the second century. Justin Martyr, by 200 A. D. recognized all the inspired books except Hebrews and Revelation.

THE DISPUTED BOOKS

1. **Hebrews:** The question of the genuineness of the Hebrew epistle springs from the fact no author is ascribed to it. However, apostolic origin was not questioned by early church scholars. For example, Origen expresses the fact that there was some doubt as to the composition of it, but none with reference to its apostolic

origin. His testimony is valuable since he had opportunity to have correct information. He was made teacher of Catechumens in Alexandria at the age of 18 in the year 203 A. D. This implies intimate knowledge of the sacred scriptures. His father, Leonides, had suffered martyrdom at Alexandria under the persecution of Septimius Severus (193-211). His life was filled with trials, and later in life he made his home in Caesarea, dying in Tyre after suffering torture at the hands of persecutors. He believed Hebrews contained Paul's thoughts but written down by someone such as Luke or Clement of Rome.

The Muratorian canon omits Hebrews. It is the earliest formal catalog of the New Testament, a manuscript found in 1740 in Milan by an Italian named Muratori. It belongs to the 7th or 8th century, being a Latin translation from a Greek original, and claiming to have been composed by a contemporary of Pius, Bishop of Rome, who died in 157 and is not of later date than A. D. 170. (McGarvey, *Christian Evidences*, p. 74). McGarvey believes it is more likely the important epistles of I and II Peter, I John, James and Hebrews were lost from the Muratorian canon rather than being originally omitted. This is evident from the fact that epistles of lesser importance, such as II and III John, and Philemon are present. He believes, further, there is no reason to doubt the generally accepted fact that Paul is its author, written approximately A. D. 63 at the close of his two years imprisonment in Rome, and before the death of Timothy (Heb. 13:18-23) (*ibid.*, p. 119). It is generally believed that Paul omitted his name to prevent Jewish prejudice toward him from a refusal to read the epistle.

2. **James:** Because of the authority which is evident in this epistle, the author is identified either with James the apostle, son of Alphaeus, or James, the Lord's brother. James the brother of John died early as a martyr (Acts 12), the Lord's brother suffered martyrdom in A. D. 63 in Jerusalem (*ibid.*, p. 120). (See Gal. 1:19; 2:9; Acts 12:17; 21:18; Gal. 2:12). It is still unsettled whether James, son of Alphaeus (Luke 6:15) and James, the Lord's brother are the same or different. If different, the Lord's brother is most likely the author. Internal evidence shows it to have been written in Palestine, where James the Lord's brother resided (James 1:11; 3:12; 5:7).

The fact that Irenaeus was acquainted with the book of James (130-200 A. D.) and Origen referred to it as the "divine epistle of James," sometimes calling him apostle and sometimes "the brother of the Lord," indicates its place in the canon. Although Eusebius places it among "disputed" books, yet he declares it was publicly used in most of the churches. After the latter part of the fourth century doubts which had been before entertained to a limited extent, especially in the Greek church, where it was least likely to be well known, quietly passed away, and it took its place everywhere as a coequal part of the New Testament collection. On the whole, there is abundant external evidence in favor of the book, to place it in a position where its doctrinal contents shall be able to demonstrate to every reasonable mind their vast superiority over any non-canonical productions of the post-apostolic age.

The fact of a comparatively slow growth of the Canon will not, in the thoughtful mind, militate against its correctness or authority; but as being, under the circumstances, the most natural of all processes, will rather confirm them. This growth, like that of the plant, we may not be able wholly to explain in its various phenomena, or even to understand: but the elements and conditions of such growth may be easily indicated; the law and the direction of it be clearly apprehended; its reality fully demonstrated.

While such writers as Lardner and Bleek would have a twofold Canon, the first including the universally acknowledged books – the

"Homologoumena" of Eusebius – the second, the "Antilegomena" or "disputed books," such as have, in different degrees, an external support only less full and complete, like James, II and III John, Jude, II Peter, Hebrews and Revelation; still, they see no sufficient reason for excluding any of the latter from the Canon altogether, and much less for receiving into it, in whatever rank, any of those other numerous writings of Christian antiquity which were used now and then, in the early church, and rarely, even as possessing Scriptural authority. (E. Cone Bissell, *The Historic Origin of the Bible*, New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 1873, pp. 235f, 182f, 185).

REVIEW QUESTIONS
"Formation of the Canon"

1. What is the meaning, in our context, of the word "canon"?

2. What is the importance of ascertaining the Canon of Scripture?

3. What are some false views regarding the Canon?

4. Upon what did and did not canonicity

depend?

5. To whom did God reveal the Old Testament? (Rom. 3:1f).

6. In what period did Josephus ascribe the writing of the Old Testament?

7. Name three witnesses to the 39 books of the Old Testament.

8. Besides the apocrypha, from what Old Testament books do New Testament writers not quote?

9. How did canonization form concerning the New Testament books? (Col. 4:16; Rev. 1:11; II Pet. 3:15).

10. Why did early New Testament Christians select the books they did? (Jude 3; I Cor. 2:12f; II Tim. 3:16f).

11. How did they know them to be inspired? (Heb. 2:1-4; John 20:30f; Mark 16:17-20).

12. What were, and are, the five tests of canonicity?

13. How did heresy make more important the recognition of proper books?

14. How did second century doctrinal problems focus attention on the need for the canon?

15. How did mission work to foreign countries make the canon imperative?

16. What books of the canon did Jerome translate into Latin and what was it called?

17. How did persecutions lead to firm recognition of the canon?

18. How did Tertullian speak of the New Testament books?

19. By 200 A. D., how many books in the canon did Justin Martyr recognize?

20. To whom did Origen attribute the book of Hebrews?

21. What does McGarvey say of the absence of some books from the

Muratorian canon?

22. To whom does he attribute the writing of Hebrews and when?

23. What facts lend evidence to the Lord's brother as author of James?

24. What early church "father" was acquainted with James (the book)?

25. Who referred to it as "the divine epistle of James," sometimes calling him "the Lord's brother" and sometimes "apostle James"?

26. Who placed James among disputed books, yet declared its public use among churches?

27. Does the comparatively slow growth of the canon militate against its correctness or its authority?

28. Explain Lardner and Bleek's twofold canon: Homologoumena and antilegomena, and their conclusion.

Chapter Twelve

THE GOSPEL MIRACLES

Infidelity has always denied miracles of the gospel. There are others who will accept the realities of the miracles but deny their apologetic value. They argue that if the miracles of Christ prove His divinity, then apostolic miracles would prove the divinity of the apostles. But the mere fact one worked a miracle did not prove the divinity of him who worked them, as careful Bible students may discern. What is a miracle? It is not something contrary to nature, but it is beyond nature. It is an intervention into the natural from a power above that of human, thus supernatural, working toward a purpose that is divine through some man. It is therefore an exercise of divine power entrusted to the man for a divine purpose.

Miracles did demonstrate the mercy of Christ toward men, however it is doubtful if any miracle was ever wrought for that purpose alone. A deeper purpose can usually be discerned, such as in Matt. 9:1-6, when Jesus healed the man sick of the palsy saying, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven." When the scribes said within themselves, "This man blasphemeth," Jesus said, "which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk?" Thus, Jesus claimed to forgive sins, and He worked a miracle in proof of the claim. If the apostles had made such a claim and worked a miracle, it would have proved it, but they did not make this claim. Only Jesus had the power to forgive sins. Jesus worked miracles to prove His deity. "But the witness which I have is greater than John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me" (John 5:36). He went a step further by saying that without their evidence those who rejected his claim would have been blameless: "If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin, but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John 15:24). Miracle working was a proof of Jesus then as to His claims; it is still necessary. It is not enough to acknowledge Him as a great and good man, and *one* of the world's great religious leaders. We must accept His claim to be the *only* begotten Son of God by accepting the proofs of such claims, as did Nicodemus: "No man can do these signs except God be with him" (John 3:2).

1. Wonders (*teras*), meaning something strange, causing the beholder to marvel, and always used in the plural (Acts 2:19, 22, 43; 6:8; 7:36). Wonders are manifested as Divine operations in 13 occurrences, three times ascribed to the work of Satan through human agents (Matt. 24:24; Mark 13:22; II Thess. 2:9). It is usually with "signs" (Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*).

2. Signs (*semeion*), a sign, mark, indication, token. Of miraculous acts, as tokens of Divine authority and power, e.g., Matt. 12:38f; John 2:11; 3:2; 4:54; 10:41; 20:30. Vine, *ibid.*, I Cor. 1:22: "In this word, the ethical purpose of the miracle comes out, but least in the word, "wonder". (Trench, *Notes on the Miracles*, p. 4).

3. Powers (*dunamis*), of mighty works, or powers, e.g., Mark 6:5; 9:39; Acts 2:22; 8:13; II Cor. 12:12. "The three terms, wonders, signs and powers occur three times in connection with each other," (Trench, *ibid.*). Although on each occasion they occur in a different order.

4. Works (*ergon*), referring to the works

of Christ miraculously wrought as though wonderful were only the natural form of working for Him who is dwelt in by all the fulness of God" (Trench, *ibid.*). See also John 7:21; 10:25, 32, 38; 14:11, 12: 15:24; cf. Matt. 11:2.

DEFINITION AND AUTHORITY OF MIRACLES

A miracle is an event making known to the senses a presence of a personal power, on a plane higher than human, working toward a moral and spiritual end. While the miracle is not nature, so neither is it against nature. It is beyond and above the nature we know, but not contrary to it. The miracle is not unnatural. "The true miracle is a higher and a purer nature, coming down out of the world of untroubled harmonies into this world of ours in which there is much discord, and bringing it back if but for a moment, into harmony with that higher. Miracles exceed the laws of our nature, but it does not therefore follow that they exceed the laws of all nature" (Trench, *ibid.*, pp. 12f).

The miracle is an ethical act, only to be received when it is so, and when it seals doctrines of holiness. Antichrist has his "signs and wonders" (II Thess. 2:9), but does he have right to demand faith and allegiance of men? No, the miracle must witness for itself, and the doctrine must witness for itself, and then, and then only, must the first be capable of witnessing for the second." (Trench, *ibid.*, pp. 20f). Gerhard has said, "Miracles are the tokens and seal of doctrine; now as a seal torn from a document is of no avail as proof, so miracles avail nothing without doctrine."

MODERNISTIC VIEWS OF MINISTERS ON MIRACLES

Following are quotations from Dan Gilbert's page in "World Wide Christian Conservation:"

1. One minister commented, "The machinery of Protestantism is securely in the grip of the liberal element. That is what really counts. So long as the great seminaries, the publishing houses, the denominational organizations are controlled by liberalism, there is no chance for the orthodox to make a comeback."

2. In Washington, D. C., I addressed a group of ministers on the subject, "The Faith of Our Fathers." When I concluded, a well-known minister spoke up. He said,

"We liberal clergymen no longer are interested in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. We do not believe we should even waste our time engaging in it. So far as we are concerned, it makes no difference whether Christ was born of a virgin or not. We don't even bother to formulate an opinion on the subject."

3. In Arlington, Va., I spoke to another group of ministers. One of them commented at the conclusion, "We have closed our minds to such trivial considerations as the question of the resurrection of Christ. If you fundamentalists wish to believe in that nonsense or argue about it, we have no objection, but we have more important things to preach about than the presence or absence of an empty tomb some twenty centuries ago."

4. One of the Va. ministers said, "We are interested in human life and human destiny on earth. We don't know or care whether there is a life beyond the grave. We presume there is a God, but we know that he will ever be a mystery to us. Religion means very little, if anything; in the modern world, religion has no vital place.

The function of the modern minister is to guide the thinking people along social and economic lines. Morals like religion, are out of date. The world today requires a new social order. The younger generation won't need either morals or religion, if we create a social order in which poverty and ignorance have no place. We are moving in the direction of eliminating prayer from our church services altogether. We still include it occasionally to please those who are accustomed to it. Prayer is a sort of habit with folks. It takes time to educate them to a realization that it is a hangover from the superstitious past."

5. "We do not teach Bible to our young people. Our youth program is centered around recreation." The leading Methodist minister of Washington said, flatly, "In our denomination what you call the Faith of our Fathers is approaching total extinction. Of course, a few of the older ministers still cling to the Bible. But among the younger men, the real leaders, I do not know a single one who believes in Christ or the fundamentals."

Such modernism cuts the very heart out of the New Testament gospel. The evolutionist, the proclaimer of a "social gospel," the believer in "situation ethics," and the existentialist all wind up at the same place. By denying the supernatural, they have no absolute standard, no normative guide in the realm of ethics or doctrine. Everything to them is relative. They find no value in right or wrong, for they have no heaven to be gained or hell to be shunned. The center of the gospel story is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Everything pivots around these central truths and derive their power and force from their veracity. The ethical teachings of Jesus are powerless without them.

The Bible teaches that good and evil differ. They are fixed and absolute. If there is no heaven to be gained and hell to be shunned, how do we explain the freedom of the will to make choices? Since God is good, he hates evil, thus a hell is prepared for those who are evil by choice for Him to cast out. Heaven is a prepared place for people who are making preparation to go there by their decided choice. God does not arbitrarily thrust upon man that which man does not want and for which he is not prepared. He leaves the decision to us, giving us our freedom of choice, but he warns of the consequence of disobedience to Him, and tells that hell is prepared for the devil and his angels, but that if it is our choice to disobey Him, we shall be cast out with the devil and his angels. It is not out of harmony with the purposes of "soul-making," in the universe which God has planned, for Him to punish man eternally for his disobedience.

The doubter of miracles is faced with difficulties, more so than the believer. The atheist and unbeliever can be driven from his position, for it is not based on sound thinking. His "reasonings are vain" (Rom. 1:21). On the other hand, the miracles of the New Testament are undergirded by evidence. God did not use them as a toy. He had a divine purpose, namely, to prove the deity of Jesus and to confirm the word of the apostles and other inspired men (Luke 10:16; John 20:30f; Heb. 2:1-4). Jesus is more than a mere ideal. He is the Son of God. God is with Him (John 3:2; 11:41-43).

THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Critics of the virgin birth treat us to the "silence" argument by saying the virgin birth occurs only once in Matt. 1:18-25 in the New Testament. To which we reply, once is enough. However, it is not true that it is only given once, since Mark agrees, as well as Luke and John (Luke 1:26ff; John 1:1, 14). Paul agrees in the following passages: Gal. 4:4; Rom. 3:22; II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 1:3. The fact is accepted throughout the New Testament by implication. Other critics, such as Harry Emerson Fosdick, state: "The virgin birth is a biological thing we can't understand," thus he rejects it. Of course, finite minds cannot understand a miracle, for it is a work of the infinite being. Even in creation, there are things we do not understand. Who can understand and explain *life*? Because we do not fully understand life and cannot adequately explain how the seed is planted, germinates and comes into full fruition, does not prevent us from eating the fruit! Nor should our failure to understand and explain the virgin birth prevent us from partaking of the fruit of Christianity. Other critics say the virgin birth is a myth, similar to the myth that the mother of Buddha conceived through a star. That of Buddha is a myth, but this story about him arose years after Buddha died. That of Christ was prophesied many hundreds of years before he was born, and thus is distinctive (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:31-35). The prophecies of Christ testify, the New Testament confirms, and the life of Christ proves that the virgin birth was not mythical but an actual happening. In connection with this James Orr, says:

> They relate to an historical person, and are given, as we saw, in an historical setting, with circumstantial details of name, place, date, etc. The myths with which they are brought into comparison – Greek, Roman, Babylonian, Persian – show nothing of this kind. They are on the face of them quite unhistorical, vague, formless, timeless. Their origin lies far back in the dawn of time mostly in the poetical personification of natural phenomena. But surely to urge these coarse fables as analogies to the story of the Gospels is to show a strange blindness to the fact of the case. It is the fact that not one of these tales has to do with a virgin birth in the sense in which alone we are here concerned with it. It is a strange imagination that can suppose that these foul tales could be taken over by the church, and in the short space before the composition of our Gospel, become the inspiration of the beautiful and chaste narratives contained in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. (R. C. Foster, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1971, pp. 249f).

Foster summarizes the evidence in favor of the virgin birth as follows:

> 1. Two gospels affirm the virgin birth. Their accounts are remarkably different and entirely independent of one another; yet their testimony is a unit. They offer the only records we have concerning the birth of Jesus.
>
> 2. These early chapters of Matthew and Luke are inseparable parts of these Gospels. No manuscript evidence of any significance can be produced against them. The peculiar readings of Matt. 1:16, found in the cursive of the 12th century, and a few other late Greek manuscripts . . . do not necessarily deny the virgin birth and are so feebly supported as to emphasize the overwhelming character of the textual evidence. The desperate expedient of Hernack, Von Soden, Schmiedel, et al, in cutting Luke 1:33, 34 from the text when there is absolutely no evidence against it, illustrates the bitter prejudice of the critic and the unassailable character of textual background of the records of the virgin birth. These early chapters of Matthew and Luke cannot be split off

from the respective Gospels. They stand or fall as an integral part of the biographies of Jesus.

3. Matthew and Luke, in offering this testimony, fit into and supplement the rest of the New Testament in this regard. They throw a flood of light upon the profound discussions of the incarnation offered in the rest of the New Testament. Paul and John evidently presuppose the virgin birth, and build upon it in offering their whole conception of Jesus.

4. The citing of ancient myths of the birth of heroes from gods and goddesses is idle gossip unless some literary connection can be established between these and the New Testament.

5. The great importance of the virgin birth in the "divine meaning of Christ" is shown by the persistent and bitter attacks of the radicals upon it.

6. The fact that most of those who deny the virgin birth also deny the sinlessness and the pre-existence of Jesus, and in fact, the incarnation itself, argues for an

essential connection between the manner of Jesus' birth and the entire New Testament conception of Him. If Jesus is God, and existed from all eternity, how else could He enter the world than through a miraculous birth? Does not His sinlessness demand it? With two human parents, could He have escaped the universal contamination of sin? Without one human parent, could He have shared our experience? The manner of His birth seems essential to the incarnation itself, the inexplicable union of the human and the divine. (Foster, *ibid.*, pp. 250f).

REVIEW QUESTIONS
"The Gospel Miracles"

1. Did the fact one worked a miracle in the first century prove his divinity?

2. Is a miracle contrary to nature? Explain.

3. What is the general purpose of a miracle?

4. What deeper purpose than mercy is evident in the miracle of Matt. 9:1-6?

5. Why did Jesus work miracles? (John 5:36).

6. What did Jesus say of those who saw his miracles, but rejected his claims? (John 15:24).

7. Distinguish four Bible words used for miracles.

8. What relationship does a miracle have with doctrine?

9. Give the modernistic view of Christ, Christianity, the virgin birth, the resurrection and future life, prayer and the Bible.

10. What is the effect of modernism as to the New Testament?

11. What do situation ethics, evolution and existentialism have in common?

12. Where do New Testament ethics obtain their power?

13. Answer the "silence" argument on the virgin birth.

14. Answer: “The virgin birth is a myth, like that of Buddha.”

15. Answer: “The virgin birth is a biological thing we can’t understand, thus it is to be rejected.”

16. Give three of Foster’s six evidences in favor of the virgin birth.

Chapter Thirteen

MIRACLES: THE RESURRECTION

There is no doubt but that the resurrection is the one miracle which is pivotal, and around which the whole scheme of redemption revolves. It is true in a sense that miracles were like the scaffolding on a building, which is essential to the erection of the building, but when finished, the scaffolding is torn down. This demonstrates the fact that the need for *performance* of miracles in our presence is no longer needed, but it is an important fact to note that the need for *belief* in the genuine miracles of the first century are just as real today as in the beginning of the Christian era. It would be correct to say that miracles may be compared to the scaffolding and the foundation of the building, for indeed the belief of those first century miracles performed by Christ and His apostles are woven into the very warp and woof of the gospel. One cannot truly believe the gospel without believing in the essential facts of the gospel: the death, and *resurrection*, the latter of which is the climax in the chain of proof that Jesus is truly the Christ, the Son of

God. Our faith hinges on acceptance of the testimony of inspired men in this regard: "But these are *written* that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:31). "Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Heb. 13:8) but he does not have to come back and die and be resurrected again for us to believe. We accept the written testimony of eyewitnesses. The question to ascertain is this: is the testimony reliable and was the resurrection story a supernatural event in history which demands my acceptance of it unto eternal life? It is crucial that we believe in it, for Paul said, "if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain" (I Cor. 15:14).

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS REALLY BELIEVED IN THE RESURRECTION

Three of the writers of the New Testament claimed to be eyewitnesses of Jesus after His resurrection from the tomb:

1. John describes himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" and was with Him at the cross when Jesus said, "Son, behold thy mother" (John 13:23; 19:26). He went with Peter to the tomb, finding it empty. He was with the Lord after

His resurrection and recorded the incident in which Peter said, "and what shall this man (John) do?" (John 21:21). John affirmed, "This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true" (John 21:24).

2. Peter was also intimate with Christ, sharing with John that inner circle of close friendship with Jesus. He affirmed that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ did by His "great mercy beget us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (I Pet. 1:3). If the resurrection had never occurred, why would it be described as producing a renewal of "living hope?" The disciples, whose spirits had been saddened by his crucifixion, were now able to face persecution and their own death, for Christ, "the first fruits of them that sleep" (I Cor. 15:23), had given assurance by His own resurrection "that at the revelation of His glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy" (I Pet. 4:13). Elders, the under shepherds could rejoice, since "the chief shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away" (I Pet. 5:4). (See also I Pet. 1:7, 21; II Pet. 1:11, 16).

3. Paul is also a witness of the

resurrection, although he "was as a child untimely born" (I Cor. 15:8). He lists the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection, including that to himself on the road to Damascus.

4. Others who were witnesses were those qualified to be apostles and to be considered to take the place of Judas, namely Joseph and Matthias (Acts 1:22f). The book of Acts (2:31-33) abounds with examples of those apostles and others who "with great power gave their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33). It was their proclamation of the resurrection from the dead that prompted the first imprisonment at the hands of the priests and Sadducees (Acts 4:1f). After they escaped from prison, Peter told the council and the high priest, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree" (Acts 5:30). Stephen proclaimed his resurrection as he was dying, for he saw "Jesus standing on the right hand of God" and called on the Lord saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7:55, 59). At the house of Cornelius, preaching of the resurrection was the climax of Peter's sermon (Acts 10:40), and Paul preached of it on Mars Hill (Acts 17:31) as God's proof that Jesus will be the judge of all men. When Paul

defended himself before Felix, he intimated that the charge being brought against him could be only that "I cried standing among them, touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day" (Acts 24:21). Felix, who had more "exact knowledge concerning the Way," accepted Paul's explanation and ordered that Paul should have indulgence "and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him" (24:23). Paul affirmed that Jesus appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once, "of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep" (I Cor. 15:6). This left the matter open to anyone to investigate of those who were still living, if they doubted the resurrection. Anyone could go and ask them, since they were available for questioning. This shows openness, frankness, honesty, absence of deceit.

5. In the epistles, there is ample evidence that the ones to whom the eyewitnesses, the inspired men, wrote were made aware of the resurrection and had full knowledge. See Rom. 4:24; 8:11; 10:9; I Cor. 6:14; 15:15; II Cor. 1:9; 4:14; Gal. 1:1; Col. 2:12; I Pet. 1:21; Heb. 13:20. Since Christians are described as those "who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Rom. 4:24), it is not

surprising that this should be prominent in all the New Testament. Early Christians became such in this manner, "Because, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). This was prerequisite to their baptism, which was an open setting forth of Christ crucified, buried and raised from the dead (Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:1). If God was able to raise Jesus from the dead to new life, the candidate for becoming a Christian could believe that the same God could and would raise him from the waters of baptism a new creature, "old things passed away and all things become new in Christ" (II Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:17f).

OTHER RESURRECTIONS THROW LIGHT ON THAT OF JESUS

When we study the resurrections that occurred during the personal ministry of Jesus, we are able to more clearly understand the full truth of the resurrection of Jesus.

1. Jairus' daughter (Matt. 9:18-25; Mark 5:35-43; Luke 8:40-56).

2. The widow of Nain's son (Luke

7:11-15).

3. Lazarus (John 11; cf. Matt. 11:5).

4. Compare Jesus' repudiation of the Sadducees' denial of the resurrection (Matt. 22: 29-32). All of these were bodily resurrections, and can help us better to appreciate the fact that the resurrection of Jesus was also a bodily resurrection. The professed fear of the authorities that disciples might steal the body of Jesus, and say, "He is risen from the dead," points in the same direction (Matt. 27:64). All post-resurrection appearances were *bodily*.

OBJECTIONS TO THE RESURRECTION

1. **The disciples stole the body away.** No court would accept the testimony of soldiers concerning that which happened while they were asleep! This would obviously make the disciples deceivers, which they were assuredly not, in view of the openness with which they dealt with the question of Jesus. This charge of the Jews was perpetrated through bribery, and demonstrates the hatred they had in their hearts for Jesus (Matt. 28:11-15).

2. **The "swoon theory."** This objection

says that Jesus came out of the tomb by his own power because he was not really dead when he was placed in Joseph's tomb, thus did not die on the cross. This objection is too thin even for modernists like Strauss. Wilbur Smith, in "Supernature of Christ," p. 208, says,

> "It is impossible for . . . half dead . . . to give disciples impression he was conqueror over death and the grave; that He was prince of life which lay at the bottom of their future ministry. Such a resurrection could only weaken the impression he had made on them in life and death . . . It could not possibly have changed their sorrow into enthusiasm or elevated their reverence into worship."

The truth of the matter is that Pilate did not release the body until the centurion certified that Jesus was dead.

3. **Two women went to the wrong tomb.** It is inconceivable that the women could have gone to the wrong tomb, assuming there was another similar tomb, since they had earlier placed the body of Jesus in the tomb of Joseph.

4. **The enemies of Jesus stole the body.**

If this be true, then the body could easily have been presented as evidence against the resurrection, a thing the enemies of Christ wanted desperately to show. The fact they could not produce it is clear evidence He was raised from the dead, just as the scriptures assert.

Indeed, the resurrection is the climax of all the evidence that can be produced to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. It is also an earnest of our own resurrection (I Cor. 15:12-26; I Thess. 4:13-18).

REVIEW QUESTIONS

"Miracles: The Resurrection"

1. How may miracles of the first century be illustrated?

2. Answer: "Jesus is always the same. He worked miracles then, therefore he still does" (Heb. 13:8).

3. Why is it crucial that we believe in the resurrection?

4. What three New Testament writers claimed to be eyewitnesses of the resurrection?

5. What was one qualification of apostleship?

6. What prompted the first imprisonment of Christians by Jews?

7. Give the circumstances of Stephen's death (Acts 7:55-59).

8. How did Peter end his sermon at Cornelius' house? (Acts 10:40).

9. What did Paul preach on Mars Hill? (Acts 17:31).

10. What did Paul affirm before Felix as to the charge against him? (Acts 24:21).

11. What could people who read Paul's letter to the Corinthians have done if they doubted the Lord's resurrection? (I Cor. 15:1-8).

12. Give some evidence of the resurrection from the epistles.

13. Why was faith in the resurrection necessary prior to baptism?

14. What light is shed on the resurrection of Jesus by other resurrections?

15. Answer three (3) objections to the resurrection of Jesus.

Chapter Fourteen

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS: EVIDENCE OF THE TRUTHFULNESS OF CHRISTIANITY

Author's note: This chapter was written by Glenn Caldwell. He is a graduate of East Tennessee School of Preaching, new associate minister of the Norwood Church of Christ in Knoxville, Tennessee. He also teaches Commercial Art at the Karns Vocational and Technical School. He is retired from the Air Force, and came to us as a student after his retirement.

This chapter is a term paper prepared for the course in "Christian Evidence," a course taught by the author at East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions.

The work is divided into the following parts:

I. Efforts of the Critics
II. Saul's Background
III. Saul's Conversion
IV. The Evidence Considered

1. Paul was not an imposter
2. Paul was not an enthusiast who

imposed on himself.

3. Paul was not deceived by the fraud of others.

V. The Conclusion

> There is no fact in history more certain than Paul's conversion, and there is no more unanswerable evidence of the truth of Christ's gospel than this same conversion grounded upon the revelation in the way to Damascus.[1]

This statement from the Pulpit Commentary accurately sums up in a few words the conclusion reached by many a student of the Christian faith. Not all students, however, have been believers, and the attacks upon Christianity have been both strong and numerous since its beginning. The attackers have made strong arguments in many areas, but the conversion of Saul of Tarsus has stood like an impenetrable wall against them.

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[1] H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, "The Pulpit Commentary," Vol. 18 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.), p. 289.

I. EFFORTS OF THE CRITICS

Virtually every imaginable device has been tried in the attempt to remove the conversion of Saul as a barrier before the critics. Something of the various attempts and their futility may be seen in the following from A. T. Robertson:

> The opponents of Christianity have always perceived that the resurrection of Jesus and Saul's conversion were the two great historical pillars that had to be overthrown. For this purpose every form of attack known to criticism has been resorted to, verbal disagreements, mythological parallels, scientific difficulties. Even the existence of Saul as a historical personage has been denied by the Dutch scholar Van Manen. Baur's admission of the four great epistles (I Cor., II Cor., Gal., Rom.) left the real problem of Jesus and Paul just where they were before. In these very epistles he repeatedly and pointedly asserts the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, a matter known to him by personal experience. It was necessary either to overturn these epistles as genuine works of Paul, to find some other interpretation of his language or some defect in Saul's mental or

> moral endowment, or to accept Saul's testimony. The attempt has boldly been made to eliminate Paul's epistles entirely along with the Acts of the Apostles. It is now possible to say positively that this attempt has failed. On the other hand, the majority of modern critics accept as genuine more epistles of Paul than Baur did. But the acknowledgment of these epistles as genuine makes it impossible to make a successful onslaught on Saul's integrity of mind or heart. The same moral passion blazes here that was once turned against Jesus. A wonderful mental clearness shines in Paul's writings that paralyzes any attempt to make Saul appear a fool or a weakling. But to cease to try to find some weakness in Saul's armor would be to admit his account of his conversion and the tremendous word that goes with it, the resurrection of Jesus and the truthfulness of Christianity.[2]

Thus the battle goes on, and there will be no cessation on the part of the critics to "find some weakness in Saul's armor," for there will always be those men of brilliant mind but doubting heart who take as their chief aim in life the overthrow of the Bible. But over the years the critics have fallen, some of them even being converted to Christianity by the results of their own efforts to disprove it. Among these was Lord George Lyttleton, whose argument concerning the conversion of Saul was first published about 1747.

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[2] A. T. Robertson, "Epochs in the Life of Paul" (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974), pp. 64, 65.

> Lyttleton and his friend, Gilbert West, were "fully persuaded that the Bible was an imposter and determined to expose the cheat. Lord Lyttleton chose the conversion of Paul and Mr. West the resurrection of Christ for the subject of hostile criticism . . . the result of their separate attempts was, that they were both converted by their efforts to overthrow the truth of Christianity."[3]

Lyttleton's studies led him to set forth four propositions which he considered exhausted all possibilities in the case:

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[3] "The Fundamentals," Vol. V., p. 107, Reprinted in "Evidence Quarterly," I:2, p. 9; quoted by Homer Hailey, "Internal Evidences of Christianity" (Marion, Ind.: Coghill Foundation, 1964), p. 55.

1. Either Paul was "an imposter who said what he knew to be false, with an intent to deceive"; or

2. He was an enthuiast who imposed on himself by the force of "an overheated imagination"; or

3. He was deceived "by the fraud of others"; or finally,

4. What he declared to be the cause of his conversion did all really happen; "and, therefore the Christian religion is a divine revelation."[4]

It will be necessary, in order to understand fully and appreciate the meaning of these propositions, to investigate briefly the background of Saul of Tarsus, for in those early years lies the formation of a philosophy and strong conviction that would have made his conversion to Christianity impossible except by some extraordinary means. The influences of his parents and his celebrated teacher built within him the traits of character which would serve him well both as an enemy of Christ and as his staunchest defender.

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[4] Loc. Cit.

II. SAUL'S BACKGROUND

It is not known positively where Saul was born. Jerome said that he was born in Gischala of Galilee, and that his parents, on the capture of that town by the Romans, migrated to Tarsus. To believe that Tarsus was his birthplace, however, seems most reasonable.

He was born of Jewish parents, and their choice of Saul as his Jewish name may be associated with the fact that they were of the tribe of Benjamin, the tribe which produced one of the outstanding men of Hebrew history, Saul, the first king of Israel.

He describes himself as "a Hebrew born of Hebrews." The term "Hebrew" had a more restrictive sense than "Israelites" or "descendants of Abraham" (II Cor. 11:25). In Acts 6:1, "Hebrews" is used in contrast with "Hellenists," though both Hebrews and Hellenists were Jews.

> The distinction was probably linguistic and cultural: the Hebrews, in that case, attended synagogues where the service was conducted in Hebrew and used Aramaic as their normal mode of speech, while the Hellenists spoke Greek and attended synagogues where the scriptures were read and the prayers recited in that

language.[5]

Being a native of Tarsus, a Greek-speaking city, Saul might be expected to be a Hellenist, and indeed might be called a Hellenist in that the Greek language was obviously not foreign to him, but he insists upon being known not as a Hellenist but as a Hebrew.

> Moreover, this insistence is not based on his upbringing and education in Jerusalem: the phrase "a Hebrew born of Hebrews" indicates that his parents were Hebrews before him . . . According to the record of Acts, he could address a Jerusalem audience in Aramaic (Acts 21:40; 22:2) and from the fact that the heavenly voice on the Damascus road addressed him in Aramaic . . . "in the Hebrew language" (Acts 26:14) – it is a fair inference that this was his mother tongue.[6]

What portion of his education he received as a youth in Tarsus is unknown. It is unlikely that he remained ignorant of Greek literature and philosophy, but it is equally unlikely that the element of heathen culture would have gained any degree of acceptance by a member of the "straitest sect" of the Jews.

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[5] F. F. Bruce, "Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free" (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), p. 42.
[6] Ibid., p. 43.

> The quotations from certain Greek poets which occur in his speeches and epistles have been unduly pressed to the conclusion that he was intimately acquainted with those classic productions; they are merely such as one would pick up during long and active intercourse with the Greek population of Asia and of Europe. The same may be said of his supposed acquisitions in philosophy. That the names and general tenets of the principal schools were familiar to him can hardly be doubted; but there is nothing in his writings indicating a profound acquaintance, or even an affinity, with the models of discussion which they furnish; he is throughout, in his reasonings as in his style, a rabbinical Jew.[7]

In keeping with the custom, Saul was taught a trade in his youth, that of making tents.

[7] Patrick Fairburn, Ed., "The Imperial Bible-Dictionary", Vol. V (London: Blackie & Son, Ltd.), p. 152.

This later provided him a means of supporting himself while he was preaching the gospel.

His parents no doubt had great ambitions for him, for they sent him at an early age to Jerusalem, placing him under the care and instruction of Gamaliel, one of the most renowned teachers of his day and a member of the Sanhedrin. It was at the feet of Gamaliel that Saul studied Jewish law, probably with a view to becoming a Rabbi. It was there that he acquired the Pharisaic training and disposition that caused him to see Judaism as the hope of the world. The Pharisees fully expected that their religion would one day overthrow the Roman Empire and thus lift man to a higher plane. Perhaps even the Messiah would appear, and would help by leading them in a bold revolt against Rome and establishing Israel once again as a kingdom and world power to be reckoned with.

> He learned how to distinguish between things that differ (Phil. 1:10 marg.), a true mark of the justly educated mind. His ambition led him to surpass his fellow pupils (Gal. 1:14), and the result was that his brilliant intellect had received really magnificent training in mental gymnastics. Much that he had learned was really good in itself. He won familiarity with the letter of Scripture, a point about which

> some brilliant modern scholars are gloriously indifferent.[8]

Because of his background then, specifically his education in Pharisaism, he became a bitter enemy of the new and radical movement begun by a man named Jesus, which had drawn a great number of his countrymen into it and away from Judaism. This Jesus, after all, could hardly have been the Messiah for whom the Jews longed.

> The Messiah was to make them the lords over their conquerors. To all such Jews the death of Jesus was peculiarly offensive. That death turned his career into a hateful parody of their Messianic hopes. A life of humility and poverty was set before them, and that imposter they were to worship as the King of the Jews. The more eagerly Paul had thought about the glory that lay before triumphant Judaism in the Empire, the more intensely must he have detested the imposter who had, as he thought, degraded before the Romans the Messiah and the nation.
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> The intense bitterness with which Paul pursued the Christians was, therefore, the

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[8] Robertson, Op. Cit., p. 19.

> necessary consequence of his anticipated conquest by the Jewish religion of the Roman Empire. They were the enemy: they degraded his ideal, they made a mockery and a farce of it: they must be destroyed, if Judaism was to reach its destined glory in the world.[9]

Thus, Saul of Tarsus, a man of brilliant mind and possessing an education in the Jews' religion that would have been the envy of many of his countrymen, possibly himself a member of the powerful Sanhedrin, and bitterly opposed to the intrusion of any movement or influence that would tend to hinder the advance of Judaism, set out with fiery determination to eradicate the rapidly growing number of adherents to Christianity. We first see this man in Acts 7, apparently supervising the mob execution of a young preacher of Christianity, Stephen, whom they cast out of the city, and stoned; "and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul."

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9. William M. Ramsay, "Pauline and Other Studies in Early Church History" (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979; reprinted from the 1906 edition), pp. 69, 70.

As far as we may know, Stephen was the first to give his life for the new cause, but there would be more. "And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8:1-3).

A short time later, "Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1, 2). Thus Saul, armed with written authorization from the highest religious authority, set out to a distant city to arrest any disciples of Jesus he could find. Surely he would find a number of them there; had he not driven out of Jerusalem all those whom he had not killed? If they stopped at all, Damascus would be a likely city.

We might ponder what went on in Saul's mind as he journeyed, what thoughts he had about his past accomplishments and his present mission. The following somewhat lengthy but imaginative paragraph from A. T. Robertson may be a fairly accurate representation:

> Perhaps as Saul rode upon his way to Damascus his mind was full of thoughts about the great events that had recently occurred. The Christians were a stubborn set and were hard to teach the truth, the orthodoxy of the time. The death of Jesus ought to have been enough. But Stephen had gone the same way. It was a pity, for Stephen was a man of parts. After all, the leaders were the most responsible. He would take up the case of the Apostles when he returned to Jerusalem, for they had been neglected too long. It was too bad that these ignorant and misguided followers of Jesus had to be slaughtered like sheep. It was particularly bad about the women. He had shrunk back at that a number of times, but the miserable business would soon be over. Then he could return to the study of theology. There were some new apocalypses that he had not yet had time to read. Of course it was not worth while to make any serious investigation of the claims of Christianity. It was bound to be false since it was opposed to Pharisaism which was the test of all truth.

Gamaliel was a great teacher. How fortunate he had been in his career so far, in his parents, his home advantages, his theological training, this very uprising which had given him his opportunity. He was now the victorious champion of orthodox Judaism. The path ran straight before him to glory and power. True, Stephen had said some things about Jesus that had a fascination for him at times when he had leisure for abstract thought. Some day he would look further into this question of the Messiah. Then at night, ofttimes, the wistful face of Stephen haunted him. Just before he died he really did look like an angel, and he spoke as if he were talking directly to Jesus. What if it should turn out after all that Stephen was right, that Jesus was really the Messiah, that all these disciples whom he had destroyed, men and women, were pious people? The faces of some of them were strangely ecstatic as they died! And why did they die so cheerfully? How could heretics have any consolation in the hour of death? But away with such thoughts which sting one like an ox's goad. The road to Damascus was indeed beautiful, but the noon-day sun was growing very hot and the glare of the sand was painful. It would be pleasant to be at the journey's end. What a surprise he had in store for the heretics in Damascus! They could hardly know that he was coming. Damascus was a great and ancient city. He would be glad to see it.[10]

III. SAUL'S CONVERSION

The dramatic story of Saul's conversion is found in Acts 9, although some of the details not mentioned in this account are to be found in other chapters of Acts and in the Epistles. The basic account, Acts 9:3-18, is here reproduced:

> "And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but

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[10] Robertson, Op. Cit., pp. 37, 38.

beholding no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight. But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his

> hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized."

Following this great event, Saul stayed a few days with the disciples in Damascus, immediately going into the synagogues and preaching Jesus as the Son of God. Those who heard him did not know what to make of this strange turn of events and could hardly believe that this was the same Saul who had made havoc of the church in Jerusalem and had even come as far as Damascus to continue his destruction. But Saul kept to his new course "and confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ." What a great change had been wrought in this man, and what an asset to the proclamation of the gospel was his ability to reason accurately and to speak persuasively.

Certainly the sudden transition of Saul, from the bitterest persecutor and opponent of Christianity to its most zealous proclaimer and adherent, must stand as one of the most remarkable events of history, second only to the resurrection of Jesus.

But, did all this really happen? Or was Saul an imposter and deceiver? Was he perhaps deluded by his own imagination? Misled by a fraud deliberately perpetrated by others? As we have previously noted, these are all of the possibilities in the case, and, having gained the benefit of studying the background of Saul and his conversion itself, we may proceed now to consider the four propositions laid down by Lord Lyttleton.

IV. THE EVIDENCE CONSIDERED

Let us again notice collectively these propositions, which Lyttleton considered exhaustive of all the possibilities in the case (a consideration with which we must agree, as we can imagine no other possibilities):

1. Either Paul was "an imposter who said what he knew to be false, with an intent to deceive," or

2. He was an enthusiast who imposed on himself by the force of "an overheated imagination," or

3. He was deceived by the fraud of

others, or finally

4. What he declared to be the cause of his conversion did all really happen; "and, therefore the Christian religion is a divine revelation."

In our examination of these possibilities, we shall refer to Saul of Tarsus by his later name, Paul, and, with the help of able scholars, we should come to a clear understanding of why "No one has yet successfully explained away Saul's own explanation of what occurred to him on the way to Damascus."[11]

PAUL WAS NOT AN IMPOSTER

It is axiomatic that men act only from motive. There could have been no motive for Paul to make any attempt at imposture.

Wealth certainly could not have been his motive, for wealth was on the side he had forsaken. Even under the iron rule of Rome, the Jews enjoyed a great degree of religious liberty and their religious leaders were comparatively wealthy. Paul himself had risen rapidly to such a high religious position that wealth was certainly within his grasp if not in his possession. By contrast his espousal of Christianity put him on the side of poverty. The majority of the disciples were poor people, and Paul willingly placed himself in the same condition. Even when in want, he refused to accept help when there was a chance that such would hinder the gospel. Something of his attitude toward his poverty is seen in his letters to the church at Corinth:

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[11] Robertson, Op. Cit., p. 44.

> "Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and we toil, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things, even until now" (I Cor. 4:11-13).
>
> "Behold, this is the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be a burden to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (II Cor. 12: 14, 15).

He also affirmed that those who proclaim the gospel of Christ have a right to be supported by those who receive it. "Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ" (I Cor. 9:12).

The closing picture of Paul's life is that of an old man in a prison at Rome, asking that a cloak be sent him to protect him against the cold of his cell (II Tim. 4:13).

Reputation could hardly have been his motive, because reputation was on the side of the Pharisees, not on that of the disciples of Jesus. We have already noted from his first letter to Corinth that he was reviled, persecuted, and defamed; and his reaction to these abuses was blessing, endurance, and gentle entreaty. If reputation were his desire, certainly he had made a bad choice and should have remained where he started – with the Pharisees.

He was distinguished already as a Jew. He had the best opportunities for education that the nation afforded. He had every prospect for rising to distinction and office.[12]

Could power, or the desire for power, have motivated Paul? Although he had some degree of power among the Jews, he gave it up when he became a Christian. And as a Christian he exercised no power, although it may have been possible to do so.

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[12] Albert Barnes, "Notes on the New Testament", Vol. 19, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), pp. 161, 162.

> He addressed his inferiors as "co-labourers", "fellow-workers"; he neither lorded it over individuals, nor over the churches he established. Paul preached Christ as head, hid himself behind the cross, and rebuked sin of all kind in the churches, without fear or favour, but never with an air of superiority.[13]

Paul wrote to the Corinthians. "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius; lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name" (I Cor. 1:13-15). Paul's only desire for glory was the desire that Christ be glorified.

Neither could Paul have been motivated by the desires of the flesh. This must be considered as a possible motive, for men of more recent times have set themselves up as prophets of God, claiming divine revelations in order to indulge in loose conduct. But Paul was one who preached the highest standard of morals, lived by that standard himself, and condemned all departures from it. He urged men: "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry; for which things sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience," and, "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other . . . and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:5, 6, 12-14). No, Paul had no interest in the gratification of fleshly passions.

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[13] Hailey, Op. Cit., p. 56.

Then did he perhaps pretend conversion simply to spread Christianity? We have seen already that his background and training, his impassioned zeal for Judaism, would not have allowed this. So we are back where we started – Where was his motive?

PAUL WAS NOT AN ENTHUSIAST WHO IMPOSED ON HIMSELF

Festus, Roman governor of Judea, suggested that Paul was mad (Acts 26:24). Some modernists have suggested the same thing. While forced to admit that the historical documentation of Paul's change from persecutor is unassailable, they have attempted to explain the phenomenon in psychological terms.

> Paul is accused of being so intense in his efforts, yet conscience stricken for his terrible deeds to Christians that he became depressed, that while on the road to Damascus he experienced too much heat; and that such combination of forces working on his fevered imagination caused him to merely think that he saw Jesus![14]

> Now there have been many madmen in all times; but the difficulty which many feel in classing St. Paul among them arises from the fact that not merely did he persuade every one who heard him that he was sane and spoke the truth, but that also he has moved the world, changed the whole course of history, and made us what we are. Is the world moved at the word of a lunatic? To think so would be to abandon all belief in the existence of order and

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[14] Ed Wharton, "The Case for Historic Christianity" (Dallas: Gospel Teachers Publications, Inc., 1976), p. 57.

> unity in the world and in history; and therefore we are driven to the conclusion that St. Paul's vision is one of the things about which evidence ought to be scrutinized and examined without any foregone conclusion in one's mind.[15]

Paul was not mad. There is no historical evidence to suggest that he was depressed at any time during his persecution of the disciples. To the contrary, he was as sincere in his persecution of Christians as he was in preaching the Christ, and he thought that he was doing what he ought to be doing in his service to God (Acts 26:9).

It would be inconsistent for one to accept the New Testament account of the fact of Paul's existence, of his life in Judaism, of his severe persecution of the saints, of his characteristic zeal in both Judaism and Christianity, of his accomplishments in Christ, and then to reject the account of the very cause for that change as presented in the same New Testament documents. One who accepts the historical accuracy of the New Testament in one place and rejects it in another on no more worthy a basis than a bias against the supernatural "manifests a crust of prejudice too thick for any amount of evidence to penetrate."

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[15] Ramsay, Op. Cit., p. 11.

> Furthermore, a single reading of Paul's letters will erase any trembling thought that he was anything other than sane, sound, and slightly brilliant. No one who authored such documents as these could be seriously indicted of mental imbalance.[16]

PAUL WAS NOT DECEIVED BY THE FRAUD OF OTHERS

Is it possible that Paul was tricked by someone into believing that he saw a great light and heard the voice of the resurrected Jesus? In the first place, for anyone of that day to have produced such effects would have been a physical impossibility, an unthinkable accomplishment. It is perhaps conceivable that one might have reflected the sun's light by a mirror into Paul's eyes so that he was temporarily blinded, but we may know from our own experience that such blindness is indeed only temporary, lasting but a few seconds, and is easily recognizable for what it is, simply a reflection. It would not have been sufficient to cause a blindness which would last three days and which would require a miracle for its cure. A mirror of any sort, too, can reflect no more light than it receives from the source of light, and in fact is limited to reflecting somewhat less than it receives; but Paul said that the light which surrounded him was "above the brightness of the sun" (Acts 26:13). Further, he said that the light was "from heaven," so any reflection of which any person then was capable would have come from a direction incompatible with Paul's description of it.

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[16] Wharton, Op. Cit., pp. 57, 58.

As to the voice which he heard, it is conceivable that one might address a blinded man in such a way as to suggest to him that he was hearing the voice of Jesus or of God. However, we must remember that other men were with him, not strangers but traveling companions who were his friends and who had not been blinded by the light. They would certainly have seen the would-be deceiver and put forever to rest any speculations as to the authenticity of Paul's experience. Against their witness, Paul could never have convinced anyone that he had seen and heard the Christ. In spite of Adam Clarke's conviction that Paul saw a bright flash of lightning and heard a loud clap of thunder just before the

Lord spoke to him, we may nevertheless take to heart what he has said about the suggestions that Paul was a victim of fraud:

> One consideration on this subject will prove that imposture in this case was impossible; he had no communication with Christians; the men that accompanied him to Damascus were of his own mind – virulent, determined enemies to the very name of Christ; and his conversion took place in the *open day*, on the *open road*, in company only with such men as the persecuting high priest and Sanhedrin thought proper to be employed in the extermination of Christianity. In such circumstances, and in such company, no cheat could be practiced.[17]

But, if one must still insist that deception was indeed possible, he must face the question, who could have or would have deceived Paul?

His friends, either the Pharisees in general or his traveling companions in particular, would not have deceived him. He was their champion, the man whose determined leadership was instrumental in exterminating the new sect that was

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17. Adam Clarke, "Clarke's Commentary," Vol. V (Nashville: Abingdon Press), p. 758.

threatening to overthrow Judaism and whom they needed desperately until such total extermination be accomplished. There was certainly no motive for any devout Jew to try to deceive Paul.

His enemies, the Christians, would not have tried to deceive him; none would dare go that close to him. Even Ananias, after Paul had come into Damascus, hesitated to approach Paul until he was persuaded to do so by the Lord himself. Later, when Paul had come to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples there, "they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26).

It should be equally evident that the Christians *could not* have deceived Paul, for such an attempt would have been to them morally unthinkable. Even if some renegade from their ranks had stooped to such trickery, the uprightness of the others would have brought out the truth of the matter. No, Paul was not the victim of a grand deception, for, even if such deception were physically possible, neither his friends nor his enemies had any motivation for perpetrating it.

V. THE CONCLUSION

Having duly examined Lord Lyttleton's

first three propositions and found those positions untenable, there remains only the fourth. What he (Paul) declared to be the cause of his conversion did all really happen; "and, therefore the Christian religion is a divine revelation."

It would serve us well to be reminded here that Lord Lyttleton initially approached his study of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus as a skeptic, determined to disprove for all time the truthfulness of Christianity, and as a result of his penetrating scholarship he himself was converted. But Lyttleton was not the first skeptic to be turned to Christ by his own studies. Sir William M. Ramsay, whom we have previously quoted in this book, was another. A classical scholar and archaeologist, and professor of classical art and archaeology at Oxford, Ramsay came to be acknowledged as an outstanding authority on the life of Paul and the history of the early church. We are indebted to him for the great mass of writing he produced on the results of his research and scholarship.

In one of his books, Ramsay goes into great detail and fascinating discussion in defense of the trustworthiness of the book of Acts. Early in the first chapter he reveals this most interesting fact about himself:

> I may fairly claim to have entered

> on this investigation without any prejudice in favour of the conclusion which I shall now attempt to justify to the reader. On the contrary, I began with a mind unfavourable to it, for the ingenuity and apparent completeness of the Tubingen theory had at one time quite convinced me. It did not lie then in my line of life to investigate the subject minutely; but more recently I found myself often brought in contact with the book of Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities, and society of Asia Minor. It was gradually borne in upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvelous truth. In fact, beginning with the fixed idea that the work was essentially a second century composition, and never relying on its evidence as trustworthy for first century conditions, I gradually came to find it a useful ally in some obscure and difficult investigations.[18]

Ramsay's initial aim was much like that of Saul of Tarsus – the overthrow of Christianity.

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[18] William M. Ramsay, "St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen" (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979; reprinted from the 1897 edition), pp. 7, 8.

Only their methods were different: Saul's by persecution of the disciples of Jesus; Ramsay's by removing their foundations of faith. Both were unsuccessful, and both became disciples themselves.

That Christianity is genuinely the revelation of divine truth is the conclusion reached by other scholars who have seriously investigated the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Their own comments are appropriate here:

> No single event, apart from the Christ event itself, has proved so determinant for the course of Christian history as the conversion and commissioning of Paul. For anyone who accepts Paul's own explanation of his Damascus road experience, it would be difficult to disagree with the observation of an eighteenth century writer that "the conversion and apostleship of St. Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a divine revelation." [19]
>
> There is only one logical answer: Jesus Christ was raised from the dead; He is the Son of God; and the Bible is a special

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[19] Bruce, Op. Cit., p. 75.

> Divine Revelation. The evidence sustains the proposition with which the study began. It is more rational to believe than to disbelieve.[20]
>
> According to the ordinary motives of human action Paul's conversion is, if the facts were not as stated, unaccountable.[21]
>
> There is no fact in history more certain than St. Paul's conversion, and there is no more unanswerable evidence of the truth of Christ's gospel than this same conversion grounded upon the revelation in the way to Damascus.[22]

Perhaps the most beautiful statement is that of Albert Barnes, who sums up in a few words both the evidence and the conclusion:

> If Paul was sincere; if his conversion was genuine the Christian religion is true. Nothing else *but* a religion from heaven could produce this change. There is here, therefore, the independent testimony

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20. Hailey, Op. Cit., p. 58.
21. Fairbairn, Op. Cit., p. 153.
22. Spence and Exell, Op. Cit., p. 289.

of a man who was once a persecutor; converted in a wonderful manner; his whole life, views, and feelings revolutionized, and all his subsequent career evincing the sincerity of his feelings and the reality of the change. He is just such a *witness* as infidels ought to be satisfied with; a man once an enemy; a man whose testimony cannot be impeached; a man who had no interested motives, and who was willing to stand forth anywhere, and avow his change of feeling and purpose. We adduce him as such a witness; and infidels are *bound* to dispose of his testimony, or to embrace the religion which he embraced.[23]

REVIEW QUESTIONS
"The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus"

1. What are some efforts made by critics to try to discredit Saul's conversion?

2. What were Lyttleton's earlier views on the Bible? The result?

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[23] Barnes, Op. Cit., p. 162.

3. What were Lyttleton's four propositions to prove Christianity?

4. What is the distinction between Hebrew and Hellenist?

5. With what sect of Judaism was Paul associated?

6. Give some details of his background that shaped his life.

7. Give an account of Saul's conversion (Acts 9:3-18; 22:1-16).

8. Why was Saul's change so remarkable?

9. Prove that Paul could not have been an imposter.

10. Prove he was not an enthusiast who imposed on himself.

11. Give proof he was not deceived by the fraud of others.

12. Show the conclusion that what Paul declared really did happen and thus

Christianity is a divine revelation.

13. What further evidence can be given from the experience of Sir William Ramsay?

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